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THE  
WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

REV. JOHN LIGHTFOOT, D.D.

MASTER OF CATHERINE HALL,

CAMBRIDGE.

EDITED BY THE

REV. JOHN ROGERS PITMAN, A.M.

*Assistant Rector of St. Paul's Church, London, and Secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Education.*  
*Formerly of the University of Cambridge.*

VOLUME VII.

SERMONS AND EXPOSITIONS.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. S. PUBL. ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

AND BY H. CHAMBERLAIN AND SON, PRINTER, 15, CLAREMONT SQUARE, LONDON.  
W. CLARKE, PRINTER, 15, CLAREMONT SQUARE, LONDON.  
W. CLARKE, PRINTER, 15, CLAREMONT SQUARE, LONDON.  
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MDCCLXXII.



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MASTER OF CATHERINE HALL,  
Cambridge.

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at the Foundling and Magdalen Hospitals.

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VOLUME VII.  
CONTAINING  
SERMONS: AND SERMON-NOTES.

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. E. DODGE, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

SOLD BY HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY; W. CLARKE, NEW BOND STREET;  
RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE; RAYNES  
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J. HATT, CAMBRIDGE.

MDCCLXXII.



# SERMONS:

AND

## SERMON-NOTES.

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SERMONS:

AND

SERMONS - NOTES

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. E. DODD, ST. MARK'S SQUARE.

SOLD BY HATCHARD AND SON, 21, PICCADILLY; W. CLARK, NEW BOND STREET; LIVINGSTONE, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND WATERBURY, PATERNOSTER ROW; R. GRIFFITHS, HIGH HOLBORN; LLOYD AND SON, HARLEY STREET; J. BORTH, DUFF STREET, PORTLAND PLACE; R. HARRIS, IVY LANE; TARKER, OXFORD; DEIGHTON AND SONS, AND J. HART, CAMBRIDGE.

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# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE,

APRIL 9, 1658.

1 PET. v. 13.

*The church which is at Babylon, elected together with you,  
saluteth you.*

THE places, to which this apostle writeth, are plain in the beginning of this Epistle,—and the place from whence, plain here in the latter end. And yet, upon that, may a just question be moved,—and upon this, a question is moved, though not so justly. He writeth to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: but you may justly question, why to them more than other, and why to no other?—He dates his Epistle from Babylon in the text; but some do too scrupulously question, what Babylon is here meant. A Romish pulpit would soon resolve both, if we would take his resolution. That will tell you, that St. Peter went to Rome; and that Babylon in the text so meaneth; and that he preached to those places in his way, and so now writes to them. It would be a hard task to prove, either that Peter was ever at Rome; or, if that be granted, that he made these places in his journey. If I would insist upon the reason, why he writes to these places, that he was never at,—the same reason might more warrantably be given, that may be given of St. Paul's writing to Colosse, whose faces he never saw, as may be guessed from chap. ii. 1.—viz. because horrid heresies and apostasy, were exceedingly grown in those churches. And what Babylon is here meant, we shall observe in the progress of our discourse.

In the words of the text, are four things contained:—  
I. Peter was at 'Babylon,' when he wrote this Epistle.  
II. There was a 'church' there. III. The title that he gives that church; it was 'elect,' together with those also, to

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1141.



whom he writes. IV. This church ‘salutes’ the others. The historical discourse of these things is first requisite, before we come to the practical.

I. Peter was at Babylon, when he wrote this Epistle. For though he say not directly, “*I from Babylon salute you, but the church which is at Babylon,*” &c. yet it is so plain, that he was then with that church, that none ever scrupled it. Time hath been, when the place of Peter’s residence and death was more an article of faith, than to determine the place of the residence and death of any other mentioned in Scripture:—but, by craft and deceit, it was at last brought to be the greatest article of faith in all religion. For though you believe all the Scripture,—yet, if you believe not, that Peter was at Rome, you know who will tell you, ‘You had as good believe nothing.’ Let not your thoughts prejudice me to your impatience, as if I were setting-in to tire you with dispute, whether Peter were at Rome or no: I will confine myself to the text; and that only, because this text is brought as a proof, that Peter was there. I shall therefore, first, speak something to the rise and original of that opinion;—and, secondly, examine, whether Babylon in the text mean so or no.

I. In all the Scripture, you cannot find Peter nearer Rome, than in the town Joppa; and our Protestant writers have made it as plain, as the sun at noon-day, that he was never there. Therefore, it is a stupendous thing to think, how this conceit hath invaded the world, and got so high a seat in the hearts of men, and among the articles of religion. To trace backward towards the spring-head of it, I suppose this is undeniable, that many a good man was of this opinion, before it became an opinion of advantage, especially of that advantage, which hath been made of it these many hundred years. None almost of the fathers, that lived and wrote before the papacy arose, and that monster of a universal bishop appeared, but he held so,—but he wrote so. For it is far more probable, that these passages in them to this purpose, were their own, or most of them,—than that they were foisted into them all, and into all places, where they are met withal in them. I cannot but in my thoughts compare these good men to Absalom’s guests<sup>a</sup>, “that went along with him in their simplicity, and they knew not any

<sup>a</sup> In 2 Sam. xv. 11.



thing :”—so these took up this mistake in their simplicity, knowing not any thing of the ill use, that would afterward be made of it.

But how should these good and learned men come into that belief,—viz. of a thing, that in itself had no ground? For satisfaction to which, let us consider two things :—I. In general, to observe the proper causes of the rise of falsehoods in ecclesiastical story : and, II. To apply this particular case to them.

I. The falsities and fictions in ecclesiastical story, which are not few nor small, have proceeded especially from four originals,—one, or more, or all.

First, From ignorance or misconstruction; when men have framed stories from phrases, or passages of Scripture, which they have misconstrued, or not understood. We see by experience in common intercourse, how many lying relations are raised upon words of men mistaken, and not rightly understood; so it is too obvious in ecclesiastical story. When men have not understood, what such a phrase, passage, or relation in Scripture meant, they have been ready to construe it according to their own ignorance, and to frame stories upon it, according to their construction. I shall give but one example, and that big enough for many,—viz. that huge story of John the Evangelist, his being boiled in scalding oil, and yet not killed,—and, when buried at Ephesus, yet his grave beating, as if he lived within it. If you trace to the proper spring-head, you will find it founded upon ignorance of the meaning of those words<sup>b</sup>, “If I will that he tarry till I come,—what is that to thee?” Which were mistaken, when first spoken,—“as if that disciple should not die.”

I might speak, how ignorance in other stories and sciences hath brought-in multitudes of falsities, as Domitian’s killing David’s line, &c.

A second original, is over-officiousness of the relator. And that hath outshot the other many bow-lengths. Ignorance hath bred its thousands,—but this, its ten thousands. The undoing of history, is the overdoing; when historians, over-sedulous, and over-officious to advance the honour of religion and religious men, have thought, they could never say enough, and said, they cared not what; and, like poets,

<sup>b</sup> In John, xxi. 22.



have never thought enough said, till so much is said, as none can believe. I shall give but one example, and that in the very beginning of ecclesiastical history. Menologia, Surius, &c. will afford thousands. The example is this, that there is hardly one named in the New Testament with any credit, or without a brand,—but in ecclesiastical story, he is made either a planter of religion in some country, or a bishop, or a martyr, or all. See Dorotheus' Synopsis, and other histories of those times; and you will find this so. Now this is not true; neither is it from ignorance, nor, indeed, from their believing it was so, who first asserted it; but from officiousness to do these men honour, that they might have more than bare naming in the New Testament. There is a particular fabulousness in ecclesiastical history, that I know not, whether to refer to ignorance, or this, or to make it a mongrel of both. Such as that, that Christ laid in a manger betwixt an ox and an ass, because it is said (Isa. i. 3), "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." And that, That the wise men (Matt. ii), were three kings,—because it is said (Psal. lxxii. 10), "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." Whether this was the effect of ignorance, or officiousness, or both,—its father was an Amorite, and its mother a Hittite.

Thirdly, A third original of this, is, 'studium partium,' 'favour to a party.' This is officiousness sworn and engaged to a side. What this hath done in all stories, he knows but little of story, that hath not observed. Officiousness to religion in general, and to good men in general, who were unknown, and unrelated to, hath done much,—this, more. When writers, in their relations, were minded to honour singular places, persons, actions, it is hard to find them keeping within bounds. He is an historian indeed, that can keep 'ab odio procul et favore,' 'free from envy and affection;' especially, when he writes near the time of those persons and actions, which he writes of.

When I read Eusebius 'de Vita Constantini,' and Sozomen, and Julian 'in Cæsaribus,' 'De Constantino,' I cannot but be suspicious on both hands, that 'studium partium, odium et favor,' have made the contrary parties lay-on so much black and white, that it is impossible to discern the true visage. Thousands of such relations, thus tainted, might



be produced. Hence are more martyrs in the calendar, than ever were in the world; and more miracles, than ever men of reason, especially that knew Scripture, did or well can believe. But to pitch near the case in hand. How hath it ever been a partiality and '*studium sui*,' in countries and cities to father their original upon some transcendent person or other,—the heathens on some deity. So Livy: "*Datur hæc venia antiquitati, ut, miscendo humana divinis, primordia urbium augustiora fiant.*" Christian cities or countries have the like ambition, to refer the original of their religion to some chief apostle, saint, or martyr.

Fourthly, A fourth origin of falsehood in ecclesiastical history is '*animus decipiendi*,' 'a mind and purpose to deceive.' And this hath been sometimes done '*pia fraude*,' out of a 'holy craft:' because histories do affect, and men are led by example. And, therefore, if piety and religion be promoted, no matter whether it be done by truth or falsehood. But sometimes this hath been done '*impiissima impudentia*,' out of 'a most wicked shamelessness.' Some there have been, who have made it a trade to impose upon the belief of mankind,—either to amuse men's minds, or to abuse them, or to interrupt their study and believing of better things.

II. Now, which of these four originals shall we refer this opinion unto? It is, no doubt, but '*animus decipiendi*,' in this last and worst sense, hath maintained, that St. Peter was at Rome; but that was not the first cause of that position. Therefore, let us try the original of it by the three forementioned. First, Might it not be occasioned by ignorance and misconstruction of Scripture? To make this appear the more probably to be a cause of it, let me preface these few things:—

1. That, from the death of Peter to the asserting of this opinion by authors of less suspicion, was not a hundred and fifty years.

2. Observe, that the Scripture is silent of the place of Peter's death, unless it be to be collected from hence.

3. Credulity in those times was better cheap: partly, because deceit was not then suspected, nor discovered; partly, because neither were copies of the New Testament so common, nor generally were men so well versed in them.

4. How easy was it to misconstrue this place; and take



Babylon to signify Rome, and so to use it as an argument to confirm Peter's being there! And this mistake might be the original of that opinion.

But, however this might administer some occasion to this error, I should ascribe more influence to the two other things before mentioned,—viz. officiousness to Peter, and a study to advance Rome. For observe, first, In story we find, that the church of Rome was always much spoken of, and of great authority. And, secondly, Observe, therefore, how history, that it might dignify that church in respect of its original, hath brought Paul and Peter to be martyred at Rome, and John near it: and he undoubtedly had been brought thither and martyred, had not the misconstruction of John xxi. 22, hindered; supposing from that text, that he never died. I presume James would have been brought thither too; but that Josephus had prevented it by his story, relating he was slain at Jerusalem:—and Ignatius is brought thither from Antioch. Thirdly, It was thought an honour to have such patrons. And Rome being chief city, officiousness of story must do something more for the church there. Every place almost had had Paul for their founder: it was fit, sure, the church at Rome should outvie others, as being the nobler place; therefore, historical officiousness brings Peter thither also. For that church strove for dignity of place, before it did for superiority of episcopacy. And, upon this account it is like it was invented, that the minister of circumcision, Peter, as well as the minister of uncircumcision, Paul, was brought thither.

II. Now, whencesoever this opinion sprang, it was a chief prop for this argument, that Rome is called Babylon by John in the Revelations. True, and good cause; but Peter had not so good cause to conceal its name.—“*Romæ nomen alterum dicere arcanis ceremoniarum nefas habetur*.” It might be too homely to say, John was imprudent in concealing the name of Rome under another; but rather, it had been danger in him to have called it by its name at that time, when he spake such things of its wickedness, and of its judgments: it might have endangered himself and the Christian cause, to have spoken out what city he meant,—Rome reigning and raging then as it did. Now, Peter had no such cause. What was there in his epistle, or in himself, but he



might call Rome, Rome, when he would speak of it? Paul doth; and why not Peter? He deserved not to be bishop of Rome, if he would not call it Rome.

Therefore, Babylon here is to be properly taken,—viz. for Babylon in Chaldea. And to clear it, I shall only use two arguments or demonstrations.

First, Peter was the minister of circumcision: and what had he to do at Rome, the chief city of the Gentiles? Paul was there justly; but if Peter had been there, he would have been in Paul's line. Herein, he held agreement with Paul, Gal. ii. 9. He with James and John, gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that these should go unto the heathen,—and they, unto the circumcision. It is true; there were some Jews in Rome; but they were but a handful in comparison, not a fit company to engage the minister of the circumcision to come thither, to live and die there: but rather on the contrary. But Babylon was one of the greatest knots of Jews in the world. Scan that prophecy, Isa. xix. 23; "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrian. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria." Compare this with this story. In Judea were Jews, none doubts. In Egypt there were no small number of Jews likewise, because of Onias' temple. Now, Assyria should be as Egypt, replenished with Jews; of which country Babylon was a part. And since the ten tribes, and the two, had been carried away captive unto these countries in former times, no doubt there were now no small remainders of them there. And then take Peter, chief minister of the circumcision in Babylon, and he is in the midst of the circumcision. Need I show, how there were multitudes of Jews in Babylon, that returned not with Ezra? Need I tell you, that in that country there were three Jewish universities? Or, need I speak, how there were ten tribes scattered in Assyria? Then how proper was it for Peter to have been there!

Secondly, The word Bosor, in 2 Pet. ii. 15, speaks Peter in Babylon. What would they think of it, to whom he wrote, if he wrote from Rome? but if from Chaldea, it was the idiom of that country. Bosor was the name of the place, whereof Balaam was Βαλαὰμ τοῦ Βοσόρ, 'Balaam of Bosor.' But, in



Numb. xxii. 5, it is called *Pethor*: 'Pethor' being turned into 'Bosor,' by a change of two letters ordinarily done by the Jews in those times, their language being now degenerated into Syriac,—viz. פ into ב, and ת into ש. So that פתור in the Hebrew was sounded בשר by a Syrian. And Peter speaking in the dialect of Babylon,—it is a fair conjecture he was at Babylon, when he spake so.

I shall not add more: every argument, that is used to prove Peter was not at Rome, is some argument for this that we are upon,—viz. that he was at Babylon. And the consideration that Peter ended his days at Babylon, is very useful, if my judgment fail not, at the setting out of ecclesiastical story. I only add one thing, that if Philostratus, or his intelligencer, Damis, spake true of Apollonius Thyaneus' being at Babylon, this calculation of time shows, that he was there, when Peter was there. And I doubt not, but if Babylon had been rightly and clearly construed, the officiousness of history would have had a story of his contestation with Apollonius, as it hath with Simon Magus. And so,

II. We are come to the second thing observable in the words,—That there was a church at Babylon.

I will not insist on the word *בבל*, whether it is to be taken for the city or country. As for the word 'church,' it is not in the original, but only *ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή*. But translations generally say, 'church:' and I know not what word else could come in, unless *διασπορά* 'the dispersion,' used ver. 1, of the Epistle: and then there is this parity. They, to whom he writes, are *διασπορά*, and *ἐκλεκτοὶ*, the 'dispersion,' and the 'elected;' and so are these, among whom he is. Under these two words *διασπορά* and 'ecclesia,' the 'dispersion,' and the 'church,' joined, we may best come to take up the force of the word *συνεκλεκτή*, 'elected together.' And here again I shall, as I did before, make two or three historical observations:—

I. That the Jews were scattered before Christ, is not so hard to prove, as just to be wondered at. In which respect, there was no nation like them. How they were scattered in the nations nearest Judea, in Scripture it is plain: how, in all parts of the eastern empire, of Babylon, Media, Persia, you may read, Esth. iii. 8: "Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy king-



dom ;” meaning the Jewish people. How, in the western parts (*διασπορά Ἑλλήνων*, ‘the dispersed of the Gentiles,’ John vii. 35), is apparent in Scripture likewise, and all other writers. In a word, all stories speak of “*Judæi intra Romanum Imperium*,” “Jews within the Roman empire,” even in all places : and Dion of “*Judæi extra Romanum Imperium*,” “Jews without the extent of the Roman empire,” that assisted against Titus.

II. As this was an extraordinary thing, so there was an extraordinary work of God in it. God’s work appears in this their dispersion, because he had done that, which he threatened them to do,—viz. to scatter them among the nations ; but withal some singular providence of God appears by his singular disposal in managing this dispersion. Not to speak, how he had promised Abraham a numerous seed, and now so numerous as to be scattered strangers through the world. He had chosen them for his own people, yet they were thus disunited ;—had promised them the land of Canaan, and yet dispersed them into all lands ;—a peculiar people ; and still they are so, notwithstanding their dispersion, for they run into one knot, and retain their families : as the poets feign the river Arethusa to remain unmixed in the sea. Take them as a contrary religion to all nations, yet retaining their religion among all nations, when there was such promoting, nay, forcing them to idolatry.

III. The great dispersion was from the two tribes. The ten tribes were shut up in the remote parts of Assyria, in Halock, Habor, &c, and you hear no more of them : but of the two tribes were all these dispersions in Babylonia, Egypt, all Persia over, and the Roman empire.

IV. As the curse on Levi<sup>d</sup>, “I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel,” had a blessing in it to others,—so here. They, the sons of Levi, were scattered ; but it was to be teachers to the nation. So these two tribes were dispersed about the world ; but wheresoever they came, they carried the doctrine of the true God with them, Ezek. xxxvi. 22 ; there it is said, that “they professed the name of God among the heathen, where they were scattered, though they profaned it. Here are two things observable ; first, That the two tribes were dispersed ; the ten shut up, because the two carried the true profession of God ; the ten had been

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xlix. 7.



idolaters. Secondly; So had the two indeed been, but, after the captivity, never; and from thence they were dispersed, to disperse the name and knowledge of the true God.

Thus God did preface to the introduction of religion among the Gentiles: as by scattering the Greek tongue, he made way for the New Testament, that was written in that tongue. Seneca questions<sup>e</sup>, “Quid sibi volunt in mediis Barbarorum regionibus Græcæ urbes? Quid inter Indos Persasque Macedonicus sermo?” “What meant it, that the Greek language and Greek cities were found among barbarous nations?” It was strange, but a singular providence,—viz. that the New Testament might reach to, and be understood by, those remote countries. So if you ask, why there were Jews in all nations,—I answer, For a punishment to them, and withal, for a singular providence to all the world;—viz. to acquaint the world with the true God against the time, when the gospel came to the heathen.

V. All this diffused dispersion kept the same religion, nay, the same traditions, when they came up. All zealous of the tradition of their fathers. The Sadducees, indeed, differed in the resurrection and in traditions, yet kept exceeding much in the same rites, though they pleaded another original. It is a wonder, how the same spirit should be in all, those in Babylon, Judea, Egypt (except about Onias' temple), these places to which Peter writes, Greece, all the world over; the leaven leavened the whole lump. Trace the apostle Paul; you find he hath the same opposition every where upon the same account, because he opposed their customs. See 1 Thess. ii. 14—16: “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved.” Where you see, all of them in general, wheresoever dispersed in Judea or out of it, yet were of the same disposition, all zealous of their own traditions, and bent upon persecuting the preachers and professors of Christian religion, because that opposed them. There are, that think, that ὄγκος, and ἀμαρτία ἐνπερίσσοτος, “that weight and the sin that doth so

<sup>e</sup> Ad Helviam, cap. 6.



easily beset us," in Heb. xii. 1, meaneth this ; that this was the sin, that did hang on the Hebrews. However it were, undoubtedly this was their epidemical sin, plague, and undoing. For,

VI. For this, God gave them up to a reprobate sense. As once, for their sins, " God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven<sup>f</sup>," —so, for this, God cast off the generality of the nation, as in a desperate and incurable condition, even before he destroyed their city. See 1 Thess. ii. 16 : there it is said, " that wrath was come upon them to the uttermost." And that epistle was writ the first of all the epistles. And the apostle St. Paul<sup>g</sup>, even concludes, that they were cast off already, though, when he wrote, it was long before the city was destroyed. Nay, go farther back : John xii. 39 ; " Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts."—Mark iv. 12 ; " That seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted." Which places speak God's giving them up, and induration of them. Nay, yet farther back,—Matt. iii. 7 ; " O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?" Even in John the Baptist's time, they were destined for God's wrath. See also, 1 Pet. ii. 10 ; " Which in time past were not a people ; but are now the people of God ; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." This is spoke of the dispersion, that believed. Before they embraced the faith, God had rejected them ;—" they were not a people."

VII. But God had a remnant in that nation, that should be saved. Therefore he destroyed not the nation utterly, and continued a public worship among them. See how St. Peter, mentioning the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, &c. styles them 'elect,' in chap. i. 2 ; and here, in the text, " elected together." Take two or three other places : Matt. xxiv. 22. 24 ; " For the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect."—Rom. xi. 5 ; " Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." These places infer,

<sup>f</sup> Acts, vii. 42.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. xi.



that God had a peculiar people in that nation, that he had not given up. To those this apostle refers in the Second Epistle, iii. 9; "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise (as some men count slackness); but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God stayed his judgment that he threatened upon that nation, for some time,—that so all, that belonged to the remnant, might come in, and that none of them should perish.

It might be questioned, whether any Jews persevered in the gospel till the destruction of the city, but those that were the elect. True; many had embraced it, but God and trial had sifted them: and there were many heresies, and a great apostasy:—so that<sup>h</sup> argues, that the elect only held out.

And thus we come to understand the reason, I. Why the apostle speaks so much of their election,—viz. because the nation before were rejected, and there was only a remnant to be saved. II. Why he conceals the word 'ecclesia,' 'church?'—viz. partly, because the other word *συνεκλεκτή*, 'elected together,' speaks it enough: and, partly, because his mind was to pitch upon that, that made and preserved a right church indeed in those times, that it was 'elected,' chosen and taken out from among the rest of people 'rejected' and 'cast off.'

And now we come to take up some theological observations.

I. A church at Babylon.

1. How doth grace appear here to abound, where sin abounded! At Babel, was the confusion of tongues,—at Babel, was the beginning of heathenism,—there was idolatry practised in its height; and from Babel proceeded a continual persecution of God's church of the Jews; and yet now there is a church. How was that fulfilled, in Psal. lxxxvii. 4; "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me." To which also that is consonant, in Isa. xix. 23; "In that day, there shall be a highway out of Egypt into Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt—and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians." God has delighted to set up monuments of his grace for encouragement of sinners to come in to him; and

<sup>h</sup> Matt. xxiv. 24.



that both in places and persons. In *places*, for example, besides this of Babylon, I will instance in Antioch and Egypt. Antioch was built by Antiochus, the greatest persecutor of God's people; yet Christians did afterward so flourish at Antioch, that believers were first styled Christians there. And so Egypt was the great enemy of Israel; and yet, in Psal. lxxxvii. 4; "I will make mention of Rahab," that is, Egypt. And out of Egypt, God called his Son.—In *persons*, Adam, after the devil caused his fall, was restored to a better condition than he was in before it. Paul, who once was the great persecutor and waster of the church, was afterward sent to the Gentiles, and became the great planter and builder of it among them. And he gives that very reason, that "God called him by his grace to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him among the heathen<sup>i</sup>." So much did the goodness of God's grace outface sin, and the power of grace exceed the power of the devil.

2. Places or persons, on this side contempt of the gospel, may be capable of God's turning to; but, after that, that capacity is lost.—To that sense is that, in Heb. x. 26; "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth,—there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." This place, and all the east-country, are witnesses of this.

3. Peter at Babylon, and a church with him. 'Ubi imperator, ibi Roma,' 'Where the emperor was, there was Rome.'—Where the apostles come, presently there grows a church. Trace St. Paul, and you find it so;—trace St. Peter, and the rest of the apostles, and still you find it so. It is observable, how God, when the fulness of time came, inclined the hearts of the Jewish people to come in to the gospel. You read of three thousand souls converted, in Acts ii. 41; and five thousand, in chap. iv. 4; and *πόσαι μυριάδες*, 'how many myriads,' chap. xxi. 20. And, among the Gentiles, they flocked unto Christ, as the doves to the windows; insomuch, that God, in the prophet, says, "Who begot me these," &c. they were so numerous. Certainly this was more than the effect of man's own 'vires naturæ,' 'strength of nature:' but rather it must be referred to the mighty grace of God. Hence our Saviour, in John iv. 35, useth those words, "Say ye not, There are four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes,

<sup>i</sup> Gal. i. 15, 16.



and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." This harvest respects the harvest of the gospel among other nations besides the Jews; for he spake these words, when he was among the Samaritans. And that of the apostle illustrates this farther,—viz. of the Gentiles' coming into Christ, in Rom. viii. 19; "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Where 'creature' is to be understood, as *πᾶσα κτίσις* is in Mark xvi. 15; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every *creature*," i. e. to the Gentile world. They had an 'earnest expectation' of these times of the Messias, 'and groaned and travailed in pain together' for this gospel. But I shall not insist on that.

II. The elect of God, 'elect together,' or alike, *συνεκλεκτή*. First, observe hence, That election doth not admit of 'magis et minus.' 1. All are within the same act of election in eternity; "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world<sup>k</sup>," &c. 2. All are elect alike in Christ, as the head. 3. All partake of the same love; the same infinite love is to all alike; in John xvii, Christ makes that prayer for them all, without any distinction. 4. All are appointed to the same determinate end,—the sprinkling of blood, obedience, perseverance, and glory. 'Perseverance,' I say,—and that is a second thing observable. Secondly, then, Observe how much this apostle stands upon election, because of the apostatizing times, wherein he lived. So great an apostasy was there in those days, that it might be a question, whether any Jews were then so much as in the true profession of the gospel, but those that were elect. See Matt. xxiv. 24, and compare this with it. It was a time of trial sifted them out; whence we might build this doctrine:—

That election is the great cause of perseverance.

1 Pet. i. 3: The elect, in the second verse, are said to be 'begotten to a lively hope;' and, ver. 5, *φρουρούμενοι*, they are said to be 'kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.'

<sup>k</sup> Eph. i. 4.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE,

NOVEMBER 27, 1659.

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ROM. VIII. 23.

*And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

MANY verses in the Scripture are facile, taken single by themselves,—but difficult, when they are to be construed in connexion with the preceding. Of such nature is this verse. Take the words singly, and they are easy to construe; “We, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting,” &c. They may be interpreted to a facile sense; but, construe them in connexion and conformity to the sense of the verses before,—as the first clause of this verse, ‘And not only they, but we ourselves,’ &c. does argue they must be,—and there will appear, ‘aliquid difficultatis propter vicinam difficultatem,’—‘some difficulty in them, because of a difficulty near them.’ We may take John iii. 1—3, for an instance; “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know, that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”—These words make a difficulty in the next verse, which is, how our Saviour’s reply there should correspond with Nicodemus’s words: “Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Which words are easy in themselves; but the difficulty is to find out the relation they bear to the former. There must be something understood to make Christ’s words an answer to

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1148.



Nicodemus's. Peter saith<sup>b</sup>, that, in St. Paul's Epistles, "there are some things hard to be understood." This, it is probable, is one of those hard places. But expositors 'aut inveniunt aut faciunt,' either 'invent the difficulties, or make them' before they were so: and, indeed, most, when they have expounded these words, leave them more obscure than they found them.

The main difficulty is what sense to put on the word 'creature,' ver. 19: "For the earnest expectation of the *creature* waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." And I find especially three.

1. Sedulius applies it to good angels:—they 'groan' for man's conversion. But how are they subject to vanity? ver. 20. He hath an interpretation for that, which is not worth the trouble of your patience to hear.

2. Primasius, out of Austin, understands it of man only considered sinful. "Signaculo imaginis Dei amisso, remansit tantum creatura;" "Man having lost the mark of the image of God, there remained nothing but the creature." And, "Creatura ipsa est, quæ nondum vocatur filiorum forma perfecta, sed tantum creatura;" "The creature is that, which hath not yet obtained the name of sons, but creature only." But how this is applicable to the whole passage, without much harshness,—I leave to your own thoughts to consider.

3. A third, and which is most entertained, is, that by 'creatura' is meant, 'ipsissima mundi machina cœlesti et elementari regione constans,' 'the very fabric of the world, consisting both of the heavenly and elementary region;' all subject to change and vanity and corruption because of sin; 'Et convexo nutans pondere,' 'ready to sink with its weight,'—labouring to be got into a better condition. Accordingly, Beza renders it, 'Mundus hic creatus,' 'this created world;' and comments largely to this purpose; and brings 2 Pet. iii. 10. 12, that speaks of the dissolution of the world, to this purpose. Out of which two places so taken, what collections are made, I need not tell you,—viz. That after the resurrection, 'mundi machina,' 'the fabric of the world,' shall not be dissolved,—but there shall be a 'bodily creature' still, but purified and in an uncorrupt condition. But 'quorsum hæc? et cui fini?' 'Why is all this? and to what end?' But I shall not now dispute this; only I would recommend to

<sup>b</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 16.



you to consider, whether, taking up this sense, the apostle's argumentation be proper.

If I be not deceived, there are two phrases in the verses, as keys hanging at their own girdle, that do clearly unlock them into a sense far different from these, but yet a sense plain and probable enough.

The first, I shall take up, is, *πᾶσα κτίσις*, 'the whole creation,' in the verse before. We find the word in two places more: the former is in Mark xvi. 15; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel, *πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει* to every creature." There it means 'all nations.' For Matthew so renders it in the parallel place<sup>c</sup>, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."—The second place is, Col. i. 23; "The gospel, &c, which was preached to every *creature*." There it means the same; and is, as it were, but an echo to that in Mark. There was the command,—here the performance. The apostle here speaks Attic language,—but Jerusalem sense; Greek,—but in a Jewish idiom. For the expression does but render a phrase most usual among the Jews,—viz. *כל הבר"ר*, 'all creatures,' which they use for 'all men' or 'nations,' as I might show you by multitudes of examples. Now since, in the two places mentioned, it means 'all the nations' or 'Gentiles,'—he offers violence to Scripture, and frames a construction on his own head, and not on his own heart, that shall not construe it so here. And for aught I see, one might translate it 'omnis mundus ethnicus,' 'all the heathen world,' with as good warrant, as Beza doth, 'Totus hic mundus creatus,' 'all this created world.'

A second key, that I shall take up and use for the explaining this place, is the phrase *τῇ ματαιότητι* 'vanity,' ver. 20; *τῇ γὰρ ματαιότητι ἣ κτίσις ὑπετάγη*, "the creature was made subject to vanity." It is well translated 'vanity,'—but the word is ill construed. It is generally taken for a 'vanishing fading condition;' whereas, it signifies, 'vanity of mind.' This apostle is a good lexicon for this, Rom. i. 21; "Because, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful,—but *ἐματαιώθησαν* became vain in their imaginations.—Eph. iv. 17; "That ye henceforth walk not, as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind," *ἐν τῇ ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν*.—Lay these two places to the text, and see how they speak the same thing. And now to

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xxviii. 19.



take up the whole *περιοχὴν* in paraphrase; ver. 18, "For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us." For the very Gentiles look after this 'glory to be revealed;' ver. 19, "For the earnest expectation of the creature, of all nations or the heathen, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." God had spoke much of his sons among the Gentiles; and now the Gentiles did wait for the manifestation of these sons of God; ver. 20, "For the creature was made subject to vanity;" the nations or Gentiles were subject to vanity of mind; "not willingly, but by reason of him, who hath subjected the same in hope;" ver. 21, "Because the creature," the heathen world, "itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;" ver. 22, "For we know, that the whole creation," '*totus mundus ethnicus*,' 'the whole heathen world,' "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." For it might be showed, that, at this time, there were some extraordinary stirrings, as the child in the womb, among the heathen towards this delivery; ver. 23, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." And so I am come to my text.

In it are three words especially observable towards opening the sense of it: I. We. II. First-fruits of the Spirit. III. Our body.—I will take them up '*inverso ordine*,' the last first.

I. 'Body.'—I cannot understand it of the body we carry about us. For the phrase *νιοθεσία σώματος* or *ψυχῆς*, 'the adoption of the body,' or 'the adoption of the soul,' set alone, is unusual in Scripture,—but adoption is of the whole person. But I take it for the mystical body of Christ; of which the Gentiles were the far greater part:—and than this acceptation of the word nothing is more usual. God had promised the adoption of numberless sons, from among the Gentiles; and this was to make up the whole mystical body. And "this we groan for, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." This this same apostle calls "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ<sup>d</sup>." He hath ordained in his church divers orders of spiritual men; some

<sup>d</sup> Eph. iv. 13.



apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, &c, 'for the edifying the body of Christ,' for the bringing it to its full growth: 'Till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' Christ's mystical body was growing up from time to time under the preaching and publishing of the gospel by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, &c, and was not yet arrived to a perfect man; but when the Gentile world came in, then it attained to its manhood,—to the 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

II. 'First-fruits of the Spirit.'—This refers to after-fruits, not to grace or glory. But the 'first-fruits of the Spirit' imply, that the Spirit was first given to them, and that it was afterward to be given to others. As the priests had the first-fruits, and the after-fruits or the rest the people had,—so "Christ the first-fruits<sup>e</sup>;" and those that are Christ's, the after-fruits. And this clears the meaning of the first word.

III. 'We;'—that is, we Jews, among whom God bestowed his Spirit. I need not prove, that God bestowed his Spirit first on the Jews. The prophets oft call the Jewish nation 'pools of water,' for this,—and the Gentiles 'a dry wilderness,' for want of this: but foretell that the wilderness should become 'pools of water.' And this 'we groan for,'—that is, 'We Jews, for them Gentiles, that they might partake of this Spirit as well as we.' Or take it, 'We Christians or saints, that have first received the Spirit, we groan that God would make good the like upon the fulness of the Gentiles.'

This exposition I leave at your feet. If it be not as agreeable to the apostle's discourse; for he presently after begins with election and reprobation, that may fall out to be thought of upon God's calling of the Gentiles;—if not as agreeable to the whole tenor of Scripture;—if not as full of plainness and clearness;—if not as warrantable by the language, as any of the three I mentioned,—refuse it: nay, if it were not so, I myself should never own it. However, I will not so confine you to my sense, as to ground the foundation of my ensuing discourse upon my interpretation; but I take up one clause without consideration of the connexion, and

<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 23.



that whose construction is unquestionable,—viz. “We, that have the first-fruits of the Spirit.”

Not to insist upon the word ‘first-fruits:’ I will leave it out: and speak to this question,—‘What is it to have the Spirit?’ A question pertinent to be looked after, both because of that in ver. 9, where it is said, “That if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:” and because of the common delusion, ‘I have the Spirit.’ I doubt not the apostle speaks of the sanctifying Spirit, and so I shall handle it. I shall answer this question in seven or eight observations.

I. Observe, ‘Having of the Spirit’ is spoken of man only considered under his fall. I mean the Spirit of grace,—and so the apostle here. I mean not in opposition to his recovery, but to innocence and glory. Adam, in innocence, had not the Spirit, nor saints in glory,—but man only in the middle condition. True; Adam was perfectly righteous, entirely holy, and absolutely able so to act,—but this was not founded in his ‘having the Spirit,’ but merely in his nature. He had the image of God, not the Spirit of God. God having created him, left him to himself, did no more to him, but as Creator. His holiness was not founded in sanctification, but in creation. The Spirit created him, but left him to himself, and did no more to him. And let me ask, Could he have fallen, if he had had the Spirit? As the Spirit created him ‘impeccaminosum,’ ‘without sin,’—so, if he had had the Spirit inhabiting and acting as in saints, it had made him ‘impeccabilem,’ ‘without possibility of sinning.’ The Spirit raiseth the fallen, preserveth that good men fall not finally, and yet they are sinful: allow the same property of operation in Adam,—and could he have fallen?

Nay, he had not so much as the Spirit of prophecy; which is less than the Spirit of sanctification: for Balaam and Caiaphas had that. His knowledge was great, but it was not prophetic foreknowledge. He could see future things as wrapped in causes, but not things contingent. Knowledge is part of God’s image; “The new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him<sup>f</sup>.” This Adam had, when he knew God, himself and the creature as perfectly as possible flesh and blood could. But to know things to come, was not for created knowledge, but the

<sup>f</sup> Col. iii. 10.



Creator's. And the serpent tickles him not with the promise of knowing future things, but of good and evil. And our new creation in knowledge<sup>h</sup>, is to know God,—not to know future events.

On the other hand, saints in glory have not the Spirit 'nostro sensu,' in the sense we are now speaking of; for, 'cui fini,' 'to what purpose?' They are beyond sanctification, and now need it no more: the Spirit hath done his work with them. And as Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God,—so the Spirit, his sanctified ones; "Ecce ego, et filii, quos dedisti;" "Behold, here I am, and the sons, which thou hast given me." Grace is now turned into glory,—faith, into fruition,—sanctification, into impeccability; and there will be no need of the Spirit, in our sense, any more. So that 'having the Spirit,' is understood of man considered only under the fall.

II. 'Having the Spirit,' speaks of having it for man's recovery. The Spirit is given for his recovery,—viz. what God will have recovered. Let us look back to the creation. That lesson is divine and pertinent, Eccles. xii. 1; "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." There is more in it than every one observes. It is בוראך 'thy Creators,' in the plural: and teaches two things, That as the first lesson youth is to learn, is to know his Creator,—so therewith to learn to know the mystery of the Trinity, that created him. God created all things, and man an epitome of all, by the Word and Spirit, Son and Holy Ghost. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth<sup>i</sup>." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any made, that was made<sup>k</sup>." "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life<sup>l</sup>." Now, when God's creation in man was spoiled, by Son and Spirit it is repaired:—so that as Christ saith of himself, "I come to seek and to save that which was lost;" so the Spirit came to "restore and repair what was decayed." This is the meaning of the 'new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17; "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature." "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works<sup>m</sup>." Who works this?—Christ and the Spirit. Something Christ

<sup>h</sup> Col. iii. 10.

<sup>i</sup> Psal. xxxiii. 6.

<sup>k</sup> John, i. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Job, xxxiii. 4.

<sup>m</sup> Ep̃. ii. 10.



doth by his blood,—viz. restores righteousness;—the rest, by his Spirit,—viz. recovers holiness.

Nay, I may add, the Spirit is given only for man's recovery. The Spirit created man so perfect, to try him; 'Spiritus movens,' the 'Spirit moving,' is to try man; outward administrations are to try him; but when sanctification comes, it hath a farther purpose. Compare man in innocency with man after the fall. His state, in which he then was, was to try him. But will the Spirit always have his work of so uncertain issue? Will he never act but for trial, and leave the issue to the will of man? God, when he intended not innocency for the way of salvation, left man to himself. Doth the Spirit the like in a way intended for salvation? Who then could be saved? 'Spiritus movens,' the 'Spirit moving,' I said, was given to try,—'inhabitans,' 'inhabiting' only, and, undoubtedly, to recover.

III. 'Having the Spirit,' presupposeth having of Christ; ver. 9, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of Christ's;" et contra, 'If any have the Spirit, he hath Christ.' These terms are convertible,—He that hath Christ, hath the Spirit; and, vice versa, He that hath the Spirit, hath Christ: as, 'He that hath the Father, hath the Son,—and he that hath the Son, hath the Father also.' As Son and Spirit co-operated in man's creation,—so, in his renovation. Personal works are distinct, but never separate: Christ to justify,—the Spirit to sanctify: but never one without the other. The Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ; is it possible, then, to have the Spirit 'absque Christo,' 'without having Christ?' And he is called his Spirit, not only, 'quia procedit a filio,' 'because he proceeded from the Son,'—but because he gives him, and is a purchase of his blood. As the Spirit moved on the waters, so he moves on the blood of Christ; he comes swimming in that, and it is 'ex merito sanguinis,' 'from the merit of his blood,' whosoever hath him. See God's way of cleansing the leper, which is an emblem of cleansing a sinner; "And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass-offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him, that is to be cleansed, &c. And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, &c. And the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear<sup>n</sup>," &c. First, blood,—and then, oil. On whom

<sup>n</sup> Lev. xiv. 14, 15, 17.



is the unction of the Spirit, on him is first the unction of blood. As the person is accepted before his service (the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering<sup>o</sup>),—so the person is first justified before sanctified. God doth not new-create a person, whom he accepts not.

IV. He that hath the Spirit, hath a twofold work of the Spirit,—common grace, and sanctifying grace. We may consider the Spirit as creator and sanctifier; and, thirdly, acting in a work between both. When he teacheth man arts, endues him with intellectual abilities; he then works as Creator, ‘in bonum universi,’ ‘for the good of the universe.’ When he sanctifieth, he doth it for the recovery of the soul. Now, there is a work between both, that is more than he doth as Creator, and less than as Sanctifier; but in tendency to the latter, but as yet it is not it,—viz. common grace. Such is illumination to see one’s condition, conviction with feeling, conscience active, thoughts of soul. This is called ‘grace,’ because more than nature,—‘common,’ because wicked men have it sometimes, as appears by Heb. vi. 4: and you read of Felix’s trembling at St. Paul’s sermon. Now, the Spirit never worketh sanctifying grace, but first useth this to make way: he ploughs the heart by common grace, and so prepares it for sanctifying grace. In this chapter, at ver. 15, there was the spirit of fear before that of adoption. As the law was given first, so the work of the law is first: Rom. vii. 9; “When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” As Moses delivered the people of Israel into the hand of Joshua,—so the law, when it hath sufficiently disciplined us, commits us into the hand of grace: as in Gal. iii. 17; “The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, &c. cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” The law is subservient to the promise,—so this work of the law to grace. Is a mere work of the law sanctifying grace? True; the work of the law goes along with grace:—hence, many a gracious heart is under terrors. But is the first work of the law grace? No; it is to fit the heart to receive grace. Many now-a-days say, ‘I have the Spirit.’ How came they by it? If they have it, it is an unnatural birth, not bred and born after God’s ordinary way. To-day, debauched,—to-morrow, turn sectary,—and then, have the Spirit. That



was a wonder in the prophet, speaking of one that, before she travailed, was delivered: such a wonder is this, if it be so. No; God causeth this work of common grace to prepare and fit us for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

V. The Spirit worketh both these by the word. The Spirit gave the Scriptures, and he useth them for the end, why they were given,—viz. man's salvation. The Spirit unhingeth not the essential actings of the soul, but works with them. Now, the acting of the soul is by reasoning and persuasion. The will chooseth, being persuaded by the understanding,—and the understanding is persuaded by the object. And so the Spirit does in the work of grace: "God shall persuade Japheth<sup>p</sup>;" "We persuade men<sup>q</sup>."—Now, this is not done but by the Word. The heart is moulded by the Spirit to receive persuasion; but by the Word he works persuasion in us. Common grace, first grace, growth of grace, are thus all wrought by the Word. I mean common grace, where sanctification is to follow. Sometime there is stirring of conscience in wicked men, from horror and affrightments,—and, sometimes, from the law, for the glorifying of it: but where healing must come, the wound is made by the Word, and the healing is effected by the Word.

A man is persuaded and satisfied, that he is in an undone condition. How is he so persuaded? By the Word. The law does it, Rom. vii. 9, before mentioned. A man is persuaded to rest on Christ. The Word doth it. "Faith comes by hearing." That in John vi. 45, will illustrate this; "It is written in the prophet, And they shall be all taught of God." 'Taught of God,'—who had been taught of the devil. "Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned, of the Father, cometh unto me:"—cometh unto me *as teacher*.—And how did they hear and learn from the Father, but from the Word of the Father? Growth of grace, also, is built up by the Word: "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby<sup>r</sup>." What sets man upon obedience, and striving against sin, longing after God? &c. The Word continually applied. Man lives by the Word, grows by the Word. This is the means, that the Spirit useth. They that speak of a light within them, that serves for all,—if they mean light from the Word, let them then own the Word: if they mean the

<sup>p</sup> Gen. ix. 27.

<sup>q</sup> 2 Cor. v. 11.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.



light of nature, that never yet lighted man to heaven. "That was the true Light, that lighteth every man, that cometh into the world,"—viz. the gospel, that went through the world: it is clear, that the evangelist means that there, John i. 9.

VI. 'Having the Spirit,' speaks not perfection in him, that hath it. It speaks holiness, not sinlessness. Take this in the mouth of two witnesses as holy as any. First, St. Paul, Rom. vii. 17, "Sin dwelleth in me:" and, ver. 25, "with the flesh I serve the law of sin."—Secondly, St. John, 1 Epist. i. 8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." To them that distinguish not betwixt holiness and perfection, but say they are perfect, because they think they are holy,—I say two things:—1. They are little seen in their own hearts; 2. Little seen in the Scripture and divinity. For the Scripture is abundant to the contrary: and divinity makes the contrary most plain and facile to be understood.

It is a paradox;—Adam had perfection, though not the Spirit; a believer hath the Spirit, yet not perfection: and yet the believer's imperfection is more excellent than Adam's perfection. I might instance, first, in the foundation of either's holiness;—Adam's, from his creation and nature,—a believer's, from the Spirit and grace. Secondly, In the amissibleness of Adam's;—Adam's was liable to losing,—a believer's, not. Thirdly, In the manner of acting, of which anon. I cannot but observe that in Ephes. iv. 24, "The new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness:" *ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας*, which is rendered two ways; and both to the present purpose. The English, well, and according to the Hebrew idiom, reads 'true holiness:' and so the apostle seems to compare the holiness of the new man with Adam's. His, was true holiness; but this truer, and more excellent, though imperfect.—It is rendered also, 'The holiness of truth.' The gospel is oft called 'Truth;' and if it be so to be rendered here, then it means evangelical holiness, not only in opposition to legal, but to Adam's. Evangelical holiness is the holiness, and that that, indeed, restores the image of God: "After God, created in righteousness and the holiness of truth." Hence is that in 2 Pet. i. 4; "That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." Adam was not partaker of God's holy na-



ture, but only of his creation: if his holiness were any, yet it was man's only; but a believer is partaker of the Spirit, when he hath holiness. Let me ask this question, and answer it, and that will clear all:—

Why are we justified by perfect justification and righteousness (for so we are, because it is by the righteousness of Christ, which is called the righteousness of God), when we are not sanctified by perfect sanctification and holiness, though sanctified by the Spirit of Christ? I answer,

First, It is needful, that justification be perfect: for, if we are not justified from every sin, it is all one, as if we were from none. As, break one command, and break all,—so, unjustified from one sin, and unjustified from all. For, 1. Such persons are not accepted of God. 2. They are liable to condemnation; therefore, justification must be perfect. But in sanctification it is not so, as I shall observe by and by. A man may be truly, though not perfectly, holy.

Secondly, It is God's will and disposition to glorify his grace in holiness, by its living and acting in and against contrariety. As it was Abraham's glory, in Rom. iv. 18; "Who, against hope, believed in hope." Whether is it greater, to be holy in the midst of sinfulness,—or, as Adam, to be holy, when no sin touched him? Which was greater, for Lot to be holy in Sodom, or in Abraham's house? Compare a believer with Adam. Adam had God's image; the believer hath God's image restored. What was God's image in Adam? It consisted, first, in the essence of his soul, and made him spiritual, intellectual, immortal: and, secondly, in the qualification of his person, and made him holy, righteous. The former is not lost, nor extinguished by sin, nor could,—only spoiled and soiled. The devils, for all their sin, yet are spiritual, intellectual, immortal, substances. The latter did embalm, and keep fresh the former. His holiness kept his spiritualness, his intellectual nature, in the right temper, while he kept it. Now, to a believer, there is so much holiness, as to do the same thing. He is spiritual, though he be flesh; his holiness makes his intellect right,—viz. to know God and love him, and preserves him to immortality; nay, goes beyond Adam in operation. As, namely,

1. He knows God in Christ; which full revealing of God Adam did not attain to.

2. He loves God more excellently, than Adam did, or



could, do. Adam had no pull-back to hinder him from the love of God ; the believer hath,—sin, the world, the flesh, the devil ; nay, ‘ Deum visum iratum,’ ‘ God himself, when he seems to be angry ;’ yet, he loves God through all these : whereas Adam fell in the first opposition.

3. A believer’s obedience is more excellent, than Adam did, or could, perform. Adam had no hinderance ; nay, he was not in a condition of passive obedience. A believer obeys through poverty, sadness, pains, nay, to death itself. Thus, ‘ having the Spirit,’ speaks not perfection ; yet, at last, brings to perfection in heaven. Adam began in perfection, and grew imperfect. Holiness begins and sojourns in imperfection here, and ends in perfection hereafter.

VII. ‘ Having the Spirit,’ speaks having it for ever : “ Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end<sup>r</sup>.” The falls of them, that have the Spirit,—as, for example, of Peter, of David,—speak not the loss of the Spirit, nor the weakness of the Spirit, but only the Spirit’s disposing. Every sickness is not loss of life,—so every fall is not the loss of the Spirit. I might illustrate this from the Spirit’s acting in ruling and guiding the course of nature. The Spirit, as Creator, preserves the universe in its being and order. How ? In that he hath set rules in the course of nature, that there should be such seasons, such productions, such causes to produce such effects ; that warmth and nearness of the sun should cause spring and summer, and so contra ; and the Spirit sits above all, and gives influence. So, when nature is inverted, that there happen winter-weather in summer,—and, contra, summer-weather in winter,—the Spirit is not departed from his work, nor is he become weak, but so disposes, and that after his own rule,—viz. northern cold winds and rain, to breed cold, though in summer ; thick, cloudy air and sky, warmth, even in winter. So, though he fails of the rule set in regard of the seasons, yet, not of the rule set of such causes producing such effects. So the Spirit hath set a rule in course in the work of grace, that such cause produce such effect, that it should be summer or winter with the Christian, as the Sun of righteousness is near or far off :—and, in winter, we have not lost the sun, though he be not so near. Now, when the course of grace is inverted, and man falls,—the Spirit is not



lost, but this is according to the rule set of causes and effects; care of men's ways to produce growth and comfort; neglect thereof, to produce failings. But yet the Spirit is not quite gone from his work.

VIII. 'Having the Spirit,' speaks not having the gift of prophecy. As some did not distinguish before, concerning the endowments of the Spirit,—so do others not distinguish here, or at least confound. Hence, some will say, "I believe; therefore, I have the spirit of prophecy." Of all men, I believe least they have the Spirit, that boast of it. But to this I shall only say two things:—

First, Did the very holiness of Christ's person, necessarily endue him with the spirit of prophecy? If so, then what need had he of the gift of the Spirit? It is said of John<sup>s</sup>, "That he should be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." But it is not said so of Christ; nor was John Baptist filled with the Holy Ghost in that sense.

Secondly, These are of so different natures, that one is not the cause of the other. 1. The Spirit of sanctification is only to help our infirmities, &c; the spirit of prophecy not. 2. The Spirit of sanctification is beneficial to the person, in order to his salvation; the other, not. 3. The Spirit of sanctification only proves good; the other, may be the occasion of evil. St. Paul's revelations were in danger to puff him up; "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me<sup>t</sup>." 4. The Spirit of sanctification changeth the heart; the other, not. 5. It goeth through the whole soul; the other, not.

And thus I have done with the eight observations I named,—which may serve as good directions for our understanding, what it is to have the Spirit, and what is the nature of his operations. I might add more. As, first, One may have the Spirit, and not know it. Secondly, One may have a great measure of the Spirit, and yet doubt whether he have it at all. Thirdly, The Spirit is not had upon courtesy of man's will, but by the overpowering of God's grace. Fourthly, The chief way of the working of the Spirit, is to work faith and love, and to build up Christians by faith and love.

<sup>s</sup> Luke, i. 15.

<sup>t</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 7.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE,

JUNE 24, 1660.

1 COR. XIV. 26.

*How is it, then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.*

THE last time I spoke of one abuse in the public assembly of this church of Corinth,—and that was, ‘misjudging and misreceiving the holy sacrament.’ Here in the text, is another disorder and confusedness, in the exercise of the public ministry: from what arising uncertain, but certainly ending in non-edification, as the apostle intimates by the conclusion of the verse. Such confusion, indeed, in their business, that we know not where to find them; and, indeed, the chapter is very hard: very hard, either to find out what it was they did,—or, what it is the apostle would have them do,—or, whence proceeded that enormity, that he doth correct. We will inquire after it the best we can, and keep as near as we can to the words of the text.

In it are three parts:—I. What to do in a certain case: ‘how is it, then, brethren?’ II. The case propounded; ‘when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.’ III. The determination given; ‘let all things be done to edifying.’

I. What to do in a certain case. *Tí ἐστι*, a school-phrase; and, if I be not much deceived, the same with *מהו*, a word used infinitely in the Talmud, and in Tanchum oft.

למדנו רבינו כהן בעל מום מהו שישא את כפיו

למדנו רבינו מהו להרלק

the word occurs a thousand times.

It means most commonly, “What is to be done in this case?” or, “May such a thing be done?” either will serve here.

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1155.



“Every one hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue,” &c. ‘What is to be done in this case?’ or, ‘May we do thus, and keep to this custom?’—The apostle resolves the case, in the end of the verse,—“Let all things be done to edifying.” And so ver. 15, compared with ver. 14; “If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.” And then comes on *τί οὖν ἐστὶ*; “What is then to be done?”—ver. 15, “I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.” So in Acts xxi. 22, *τί οὖν ἐστὶ*; “What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear, that thou art come.” The brethren at Jerusalem are here deliberating concerning the case of St. Paul’s preaching to the Jews’ strangers, that they should forsake the institutions of Moses: the report of which had given great distaste unto the believing Jews in Jerusalem. This was the case. *Τί οὖν ἐστὶ*; “what is to be done, therefore?” Then follows the resolution. Do this, therefore, that we say unto thee, ver. 23.—This, then, is the question, ‘What is to be done in a certain case?’ Now the case is this, which is the second particular contained in the text.

H. The case propounded: ‘Every one hath a psalm,’ &c. Here are two questions:—first, Whether every one in the congregation had these gifts? And, secondly, If not, whether every one, that had gifts, had all these gifts?

To the former question, I answer, It is undoubted, but that spiritual gifts were in this church: 1 Cor. i. 5; “That in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge.” And in the sixth verse, “Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.”—‘The testimony of Christ,’ i. e. ‘the Spirit of prophecy;’ for that not only testified of Christ by preaching him, but also the very gift itself spake Christ the Lord of glory. And in 2 Cor. xii. 12; “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” Such were healing, doing miracles, and, among the rest, giving of the Holy Ghost; so ver. 13 asserts.—Nor is this gainsaid, by their being not able to give up to Satan, in 1 Cor. v, where you find, that censure was inflicted upon the incestuous person by St. Paul himself; for that was purely an apostolic work. As to give the Holy Ghost, was a peculiar prerogative of the apostles,—so the giving up to Satan



was peculiar to them. So that the Corinthians had these gifts that were given, by virtue of the apostles' conferring the Holy Ghost,—viz. to prophesy, and to speak with tongues.

Secondly, These gifts were not bestowed on all, but ministers only. Here the enthusiasts mistake; and they make much of this example; and their argumentation runs thus,—‘Every one had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a tongue, &c; and, therefore, it concludes, that any one may have the Spirit, and be a teacher in the public.’ Which supposes, that the members of the church had these gifts of the Spirit; whereas, these gifts were only imparted to ministers. For the clearing of this, consider these things:—

1. It is not to be doubted, but that there were ministers in this church, ordained by the apostle, as in all other churches; Acts xiv. 23, where you see what their practice was, “ordaining elders in every church.” I need not insist on this.

2. Those whom the apostle ordained, he bestowed the Holy Ghost upon; otherwise, they had been unable to have performed the work they were called to, that is, to preach the gospel to unbelievers, and to confirm their doctrine, by doing miracles. In order to which, he conferred the Holy Ghost on those whom he ordained; “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied<sup>b</sup>.” Such a one was Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 6, where St. Paul reminds him, “to stir up the gift of God, which was in him, by the putting on of his hands.”

3. Such were these persons in the text, that were endued with spiritual gifts; they were ministers, not any private persons. For proof of this, first, see ver. 6, “Now I, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge,” &c; and ver. 15, “What is it, then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit,” &c; and ver. 18, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all:”—in all which verses, he ranks them with himself, as of the ministerial function with himself. And for farther proof, consult, secondly, ver. 16; “Else, when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he, that occupieth the room of the

<sup>b</sup> Acts, xix. 6.



unlearned, say Amen," &c. 'of the unlearned,' *ιδιώτου*,—the word signifies, 'a private person.' "How shall this private person in the congregation say Amen, at thy giving of thanks;" as the congregation in the synagogue said, Amen, after the public minister? So that you see, he sets a distinction here between the minister and the private person; it was the minister, that had the gift; 'he blessed with the Spirit,' and not the private man.

Thirdly, There were many ministers then ordained in all churches. In the church at Antioch, there were several prophets and teachers,—namely, Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, and Saul: as you read in Acts xiii. 1. In the church at Jerusalem, there were apostles and elders<sup>c</sup>. In the church at Ephesus, you meet with twelve<sup>d</sup>. And so, it appears, it was in this place; and there was the greater need of many ministers there, because Corinth was great. And hence did Diotrophes *φιλοπρωτεύειν*, 'affect to be chief' among the many ministers in the congregation, where he was; and, it may be, it was in this very church, if Gaius, to whom John writes, was the same with Gaius of Corinth. This numerousness of ministers was practised in the Christian church;—

1. From the platform of the synagogue, where, though there was but one 'chazan,' 'angelus,' yet there were ten learned men, who took care of the congregation, able to teach, and do other things pertaining to their office, as there was occasion.

2. This number of ministers, in the churches, was needful, because Christian congregations were daily and numerously increasing: and,

3. Because some were to be sent out to other places. And so the former question is resolved.

Now, as to the other,—viz. Whether every one that had gifts, had all these gifts? that will be answered by and by. But, first,

Note we, the miscarriage of these ministers in the church, about these gifts, is twofold:—1. That they spake with tongues, not to edification: for they were not understood. 2. That they prophesied (when they might be understood, yet) confusedly and crowdingly: so it seems in the text, and by the counsel of the apostle: in ver. 29, "Let the prophets

<sup>c</sup> Acts, xv. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Acts, xix. 7.



“speak, two or three, and let the others judge:” and, ver. 31, “for ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn.” This miscarriage, in both these, seems to proceed from a double original:—

1. Either from some vain-glory, and affectation of popular applause; or, at best, because each thought his course and faculty best. Some thought best to spend the time in singing psalms; others thought the time better spent in delivering some doctrine; others, in speaking with strange tongues, &c.

2. Or, indeed, rather in both these practices they Judaized. As, in chap. xi. 14, they followed the customs and opinions of the Jews, in praying veiled, in wearing long hair, and in their misconstruction of the holy sacrament; so they did here, both in speaking in a strange tongue, and in thus crowding to prophesy together.

The Jews read the Scripture in the Hebrew tongue; and, although it were unknown, yet they would so read it, and have an interpreter, נתנה בסנסִיִּר. The doctor in his school whispered in the Hebrew. If you conceive the strange tongue, here used by them, to be Hebrew, as there is the most reason to do so, being a church that Judaized in many other things, and consisting, in a great measure, of Jews,—I need say no more to show they Judaized in this.

So for many of the public ministers in their synagogues to speak together, to read, interpret together, their own records do so far assert it, that they set the number how many together in each, and in some allow good store. In like manner you see, in the text, how they thus crowded, many speaking together confusedly, in five distinct administrations: one hath a psalm,—others, a doctrine,—others, a tongue,—others, a revelation,—and some, an interpretation. And the word ἕκαστος, ‘every one,’ means not, that every one had all these, but every one his something of these. So ‘every one’ must signify, if you read 1 Cor. i. 12; “Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,” i. e. ‘some for one, and some for another; not each one for all.’ And thus the second question is answered.

And now to proceed in the explanation of the text. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, are comprised under two heads in Scripture, ‘tongues,’ and ‘prophecy,’—“The Holy

<sup>e</sup> Acts, xix. 6.



Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." And, ver. 1—3, &c. of this chapter, "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God, &c. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." Where you see the spiritual gifts in the first verse are divided into 'tongues' and 'prophecy.' Now, all these five are thus reduced to these two:—

I. 'Speaking with tongues:' that which is meant by it, is couched under those two words, 'hath a tongue, hath an interpretation;' that is, either to speak with strange tongues himself, or to interpret them that do.

II. 'Prophesying:' what is comprised under that, is explained by those three words: "hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation."

1. The word 'propbesying,' is taken for 'singing and praising.' So, 1 Sam. x. 5; "Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:" אינן משבחים Chald. 'They shall praise him.' And, chap. xix. 23, 24; "And the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah ואזל מן נבואה ומשבה and he went on and praised. And he stripped off his clothes (i. e. his royal robes) ושבח and praised."

2. 'Propbesying' means 'preaching,' declaring to the people the doctrine of the gospel:—so here, "hath a doctrine." The apostles, by the imposition of hands, ordained ministers, and gave them spiritual abilities to prophesy, or preach and unfold the doctrine of Christ and salvation. So the Chaldee most commonly renders נבא by ספרא a 'scholar,' one learned and able, and that taught the people. So even that, in 1 Sam. xix. 24; "Is Saul בספרא among the scholars," or ministers? It is usually said of these extraordinary gifts, that they are "tongues and prophecy:" but see Acts x. 46, "they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." This 'magnifying God,' is to the same sense with 'propbesying.' For they magnified God these two ways,—viz. 'singing' or praising, and 'preaching' the glorious things of the gospel.

3. 'Propbesying' means speaking some heavenly revela-



tion. So here, "hath a revelation;" and thus the word 'prophecy' is taken in its proper sense, as some had, in those times, either a revelation of something to come, for a warning to the church; as Agabus<sup>f</sup>, "who signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." And he is called 'a prophet,' in ver. 27. And you meet with him again, in chap. xxi. 10.—Or the revelation was of something, that God would have his church to do; as in Acts xiii. 2; "As they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them."

Hence we may understand that in ver. 29, "Let the prophets speak two or three:" that is, one to sing praise, and one or two to preach. But, ver. 30, "if any have a revelation, let the first," that had the psalm, "give place," and let him rather be heard,—as remembering, that God might intend some special admonition to the church, by so special a declaration.

To discourse of all these five, would take five times as much time as is allotted me. I shall, therefore, only meddle with the first at present, 'Hath a psalm:' and speak something concerning that great and heavenly work of singing of psalms in Christian congregations. And that the rather, because it hath been spoken against in the cross times, that have gone over our heads, wherein all religion has been brought into dispute. Although it is a question, whether these psalms, mentioned in the text, were of their own dictating, or penned by others, the former whereof seems more probable,—yet the very mode and work of their singing psalms, shows that it was a practice in the Christian church from its very beginning. Nay, though this place speak it not clear, yet others do, that it was the practice to sing David's Psalms in the public congregation, the whole congregation together.

You know what arguments are brought against this our practice. 1. 'That the congregation is not holy enough to join with, in the performance of this duty:—the very same argument, which some urge against the reception of the holy sacrament. 2. That they being set forms, are too narrow to express our particular wants and thanksgivings. 3. That

<sup>f</sup> Acts, xi. 28.



every one doth not understand; and we should sing with ‘understanding,’ ver. 15: therefore, I shall take up this discourse the rather, to show, that singing of David’s Psalms is a duty incumbent upon Christians. For the clearing of this, I shall, first, speak something of the nature of this work, which will speak it moral, and, upon that account, fit to be used in the Christian church; and, secondly, the evidence of the use of it in the first times.

And, first, of the nature of this duty. Many things are spoken of the excellency of the Book of Psalms; and many may be spoken of the excellency of singing psalms. I may allude to that expression, “Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all:” so may I say in reference to this duty, ‘All duties are excellent, but this includes all.’ In singing of psalms, there is what is in other services, and more. Prayer is our duty,—praise, speaking of God’s works, singing, are our duties,—but this last is all; it is like the holy incense, mixed of all these perfumes. The excellency of this duty will appear farther, under these four heads:—

First, It is an action, that helps up and keeps up the heart, in a spiritual frame, as much as any. See the apostle<sup>f</sup> arguing for singing upon this account, “Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.” And<sup>g</sup>, “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.—Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” If the heart would be up in mirth, use this to help it up, being not yet come into frame: if it be up, use this to keep it, that it be not transported. The heart, by spiritual music, is called up to beat in the right mean. As David, by his harp, calmed Saul’s spirit,—so this is proper to beat down immoderate mirth. And so, on the other hand, it is proper to free the mind of lumpishness and sadness; as Elisha<sup>h</sup>, being put into a passion and disturbance at the sight of the king of Israel, called for temple-music, to pacify and allay his discomposed mind; “And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee, nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.” See a strange passage in Jer. xx: at

<sup>f</sup> Ephes. v. 18, 19.

<sup>g</sup> James, v. 13.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings, iii. 14, 15.



ver. 12, the prophet's heart is quite down; "O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause." At ver. 14, his heart is lower yet; "Cursed be the day, wherein I was born: let not the day, wherein my mother bare me, be blessed." But, in the midst of these sorrows and dejections, he falls to praising and singing unto God. At ver. 13, "Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord." He strives to wind up his heart to a right pitch, with 'Sing unto the Lord.'

As God requires outward and inward worship, so a spiritual frame for inward worship may be forwarded by the outward composure. Gazing drowsiness hinders the activity of the soul, but the contrary temper farther and helps it. Singing calls up the soul into such a posture, and doth, as it were, awaken it: it is a lively rousing up of the heart.

Secondly; This is a work of the most meditation of any we perform in public. It keeps the heart longest upon the thing spoken. Prayer and hearing pass quick from one sentence to another; *this* sticks long upon it. Meditation must follow after hearing the word, and praying with the minister; for new sentences, still succeeding, give not liberty, in the instant, well to muse and consider upon what is spoken: but in this, you pray and meditate, praise and meditate, speak of the things of God and meditate. God hath so ordered this duty, that, while we are employed in it, we feed, and chew the cud together. 'Higgaion,' or 'meditation,' is set upon some passages of the Psalms, as Psal. ix. 16. The same may be writ upon the whole duty, and all parts of it,—viz. 'meditation.' Set before you one in the posture to sing to the best advantage: eyes, lifted up to heaven, denote his desire, that his heart may be there too: he hath before him a line or verse of prayer, mourning, praise, mention of God's works; how fairly now may his heart spread itself in meditation on the thing, while he is singing it over! Our singing is measured in deliberate time, not more for music than meditation. He that seeks not, finds not, this advantage in singing psalms,—hath not yet learned what it means.

Thirdly; This is a service, in which we profess delight in the thing, we have in hand. Yea, even in sad mourning



ditty, we delight so to mourn; "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness!" It is a noise of joy and gladness. It speaks that we delight in God's ordinances, that we are about. As music, at table, shows we make a feast of delight of what God hath provided. 'Solatur voce laborem:' he that sings at his work, shows, that his work goes on with contentedness. David at his harp, and composing psalms to the honour of God, what delight did he take therein! So that in singing there must be two things;

I. The ditty to be applied by meditation.

And, II. Tuning the voice to it in the best liveliness we can, as delighting in the work. Nay,

Fourthly; This is a service, wherein one is cheered from another. It is a joint *κέλευσμα*. One takes mirth, life, and warmth from another; a holy fervour and emulation, as the seraphims [Isa. vi.] strive to outvie one another in praising God. Who is there, but, while he is joining with the congregation in this duty, feels such an impression and excitation, his own string wound up by the concert of the choir? It is a story goes of St. Austin, that it was one means of his conversion, the hearing the heavenly singing of psalms at Milan. As all our duties here in public carry some bond and badge of communion;—we come to pray together, hear together, and so profess ourselves Christians together, we being all scholars in the school of Christ;—so this of singing together more especially speaks it out. But herein is not only a sign of 'communion,' but also mutual 'excitation.' As David speaks, when he was at this work<sup>j</sup>, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." We do, as it were, jog one another to put on all as much as we can, to join together in the praise and honour of God.

I need to say no more to show, that so excellent a duty could not but be settled by Christ, with others, in the Christian church; the very nature of the thing may speak it. I shall therefore only speak to three things:—

I. The warrant of Christ for the observance of this duty.

II. The admonitions of the apostle for the same purpose.

And, III. An instance or two of the practice of all the

<sup>i</sup> Psal. c. 1.

<sup>j</sup> Psal. xxxiv. 3.



church. And all this will serve for illustrating the second thing I propounded for the clearing this duty,—viz.

Secondly, The evidence of the use of it, in the first times.

I. Our Saviour, the very next thing he did, after signing, sealing, and sanctionating, the New Testament, was, to sing a psalm. And who then can doubt of the institution of this as a New-Testament duty? Matt. xxvi. 28—30: “For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.” Let us stick here a little; and from this ‘singing of a hymn,’ ὑμνήσαντες, we may observe three things.

1. It is ὑμνήσαντες, in the plural number. Beza approves of Erasmus here for departing from the Vulgar: *That* hath it, ‘hymno dicto;’ he, ‘cum cecinissent.’ Beza hereupon, “Ut intelligatur apostolos una cum Christo cecinisse;” “That men might understand, that the apostles joined with Christ in singing.” And very true; for it was the custom among the Jews in all companies, that celebrated the Passover, so to do: for though one chiefly rehearsed, yet all had some share in the choir. And so in the case in the text,—though the psalm were of their own composing, yet the congregation bare some part in it, as Miriam with Moses, Exod. xv. 21.

“Apostolos cecinisse,”—“the apostles sung.”—Was Judas there or no? I wonder it is not confessed by all the world; it is so plain, that he ate the passover, received the sacrament, and stayed the psalm, and was present till all rose from the table. And Christ knew him, and yet gave the psalm, and sung with the whole table. And Peter and John knew him,—and yet it were peevishness to think, that they joined not in the choir, when it is said ὑμνήσαντες, “when they had sung.” What can they say to this, that refuse to join with us in this exercise? Will they, can they, say, that Judas was not there?—But if that be granted, that he was gone,—yet, at the eating the passover, it is well known every company sung together without boggling.

2. Ὑμνήσαντες, “having sung.” What? The very same that every company did,—viz. the ‘great Hallel,’ as it was called, which began at the hundred and thirteenth Psalm,



and ended at the end of the hundred and eighteenth. No expositor but grants this, and no reason to the contrary; for Christ complied with all the rites of the Passover, and started not from them in this. Here the Lord of David sings the Psalms of David. What Christ saith by way of posing, “If David, in spirit, call him Lord, how is he his son,”—we may say the like by way of admiration, “If David, in spirit, call him Lord, how did he descend, to make use of his poetry?” What says our caviller now?—“Set forms are too strait for the spirit.”—He that had the Spirit above measure, thinks not so, but useth such. He that gave the Spirit to David to compose, sings what he composed. That all-blessed copy of peace and order, could have indited himself, could have inspired every disciple to have been a David, but submits to order, which God had appointed, sings the Psalms of David, and tenders the peace of the church, and takes the same course the whole church did.

3. *Ὑμνήσαντες*, “having sung a hymn.” In what language? Here is a question, indeed, and that might provoke a scholastical dispute both in divinity and antiquity. In divinity: Did they sing in the original Hebrew? That was not now understood.—In antiquity: Had they a translation of the Psalms and Hagiographa now? Yea, they had the LXX. But all that sung, understood not the LXX.—But had they a vulgar translation in their own tongue? This draws into another question,—viz. what was their tongue? I should answer, Not the Syriac we now read; but the old Syriac, or Chaldee, which they call ‘Targumica.’ And I should answer to the former question, That they had the Hagiographa now in that tongue, as well as the prophets of Jonathan’s translation: and I find in both Talmuds, that each speaks to it to confirm it. However, who thinks they sung in a tongue they understood not, or in any other but the Vulgar? And here is our warrant for our framing the Psalms into our tongue and metre. Thus have we seen the example, nay, institution, of our Great Master.

II. Now let us hear our great apostle, the apostle of the Gentiles. In two places he speaks to this subject, besides what he says in this chapter: Ephes. v. 18, 19; “Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.”—And, Col. iii. 16; “Let the word



of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Where let us take up three things, as we did in the former.

1. Observe how spiritual a pitch he set this at, and what elevation of heart he ascribes to it. "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns," &c. It is the very vent and issue, whereby a spiritual frame breaks out in its chiefest demonstration. The more we are filled with the Spirit, the more we break out this way: and a most fit vent it is to the Spirit, when both tongue and heart speak and put forth themselves in their best vigour by singing to the praise of God, when the heart is full of spiritual fervour this excellent way. So in that place to the Colossians, "Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you:" when it does, it will break out "in all wisdom, and in teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns," &c.

2. Observe the three titles he useth, 'Psalms,' 'Hymns,' 'Spiritual Songs.' They are variously, indeed, taken, but very generally for 'the Psalms of David.' 'Psalms' מְזִמֹּרִים, i. e. psalms upon any subject: 'hymns' תְּהִלִּים, i. e. psalms of praise: 'spiritual songs' שִׁירִים, i. e. 'cantica magis artificiosa,' psalms, about which is employed greater art and curiosity. Others differ upon particulars, but agree upon this,—that by these three are meant the Psalms of David, and other songs in Scripture. What, if ψαλμοὶ be the Psalms of David upon any subject; ὕμνοι, hymns, be such psalms as are picked out and used for special occasions; as 'Hallel,' those of 'degrees,' and 'for every day?' So that word seems to imply, from the word ὑμνήσαντες, that is used to express the Psalms, that Christ and his apostles sung at the Passover, which were ordinarily used by the Jews for that occasion. Ὠδὰς, 'spiritual songs,' were other songs in Scripture besides David's. So you read of 'the song of Moses,' and 'the song of the Lamb,' in Rev. xv. 3.

3. Observe the word ἑαυτοῖς, Ephes. v. The English translates it, "to yourselves," i. e. "inter vos mutuo," "among yourselves," as Beza well; and as that in Col. iii, explains it, νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς, "admonishing one another." Which speaks it a public exercise, and of communion, where all joined, and stirred up one another.

III. Farther examples of this exercise in the New Tes-



tament, we might observe in the Revelation. That book speaks of the state of the Christian church; and one great work of it is singing, Rev. v. 9; "And they sung a new song," &c. The ordinary practice was to sing the Psalms of David: but they sung 'a new song:' and that is there set down; "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," &c. So, in Rev. xiv. 2, 3; "And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty-and-four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." This place speaks according to the acceptation of the Jews,—how they shall sing, when Messiah brings them out of captivity; for there is mention among them, of one hundred and forty-four thousand of the twelve tribes. And so, upon other occasions, you find the church singing, as in chap. xv. 2, 3.

But that, that I shall fix on, is that in 1 Cor. xi. 5; "Every woman, that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head." What is meant by the woman 'prophesying?' Not 'preaching.' For that is forbidden them in the chapter, wherein the text is, ver. 34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted them to speak," &c: nay, nor so much as to ask any question, which, in the Jewish assemblies, at their sermons, was ordinary; ver. 35, "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home." Neither is meant, by this 'prophesying,' prophesying in the proper sense, i. e. foretelling things to come. For it is a question, whether any woman in Corinth, nay, 'in rerum natura' now, Philip's daughters excepted, Acts xxi. 9, did thus prophesy. But it is plain, the apostle speaks of the ordinary service, which whole congregations joined in; and the praying and prophesying here used, is praying and praising, or singing psalms. Take the apostle's own gloss in this chapter, ver. 15; "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." As all the congregation joined in prayer with the minister, and said, 'Amen,' ver. 16,—so all the congregation, men and women, joined with him, that had and gave the psalm, and sung with him.



For the conclusion, I might produce even endless encomiums and extollings of this work in Christian writers,—viz. That it is the work of angels, the employment of glorified saints, the music of heaven, &c. I confess, I want words to express the excellency of this duty. Now, to make some use of what I have said.

I. If I were in a vulgar or unlearned congregation, I would give rules for singing of psalms, with profit: and, among divers, especially these two:

1. To mind what is sung: not only that the heart go along with the tongue in general, but to be carefully observant of what is sung. There is variety of matter in most psalms: they pass from one thing to another. This we should carefully observe: now I pray, now I mourn for my sins, for the church of God, &c. To this I may apply that in ver. 15, “I will sing with the understanding,” if the place speaks in reference to a man’s own understanding, of what he prays or sings: but the apostle there means of singing and praying to be understood by others.

2. To apply to ourselves the matter we sing, as far as it may concern us: to bear a part with David, not in word and tune, but affection. This way we must use in hearing or reading the Scripture, to bring it home to our own concernment. So, likewise, in this action of singing. Thus did they, Rev. xv. 3; “They sung the song of Moses,” that is, they applied Moses’s song, in Exod. xv, unto themselves. And this, the leisure for meditation gives you opportunity to do. “At male dum recitas, incipit esse tuus:” he that ill repeats another man’s verses, makes them ill verses, but withal makes them his own. But here I will alter the words a little, “Si bene recitas;” ‘if you sing right,’ sing David’s Psalms, but make them your own. Let the skill of composure be his,—the life of devotion, yours.

II. If I thought there were any here, that made scruple of this ordinance, I would speak a word or two to them. Let me say but two things:

First, There is no plain ground, why to refrain from singing; but most plain grounds, why to sing. A thousand times we are bidden, ‘sing;’ never forbidden, ‘sing not.’ So, of the holy sacrament, it is commanded in Scripture, ‘do this;’ but never, ‘do it not.’

Secondly, Where a duty is commanded, and a scruple



ariseth from some circumstance, it is safer to go with the command, than from it. It is commanded, in Psal. xxxiv. 3, "O magnify the Lord with me," &c. The scruple is, that some profane persons sing, that set forms are too narrow, &c. It is warrantable now, notwithstanding these scruples, to keep up to the command; but not 'contra,' not warrantable to omit the command, because of these scruples. There is no extinguishing a duty, because of some particular doubts concerning it. This rule holds good of the reception of the holy sacrament.

III. I might speak by way of incitation to all, to make conscience of this duty. Fail not to join with the congregation in the performance of it; stir up your hearts, while you are conversant about it. Say to yourselves, as David to his instruments, "Awake, lute and harp; I myself will awake right early." I will say but this, "Qui vult cantare in cœlo, discat cantare in terris:" "He that will sing in heaven, let him learn that divine exercise on earth."—As St. Paul saith of charity<sup>c</sup>, "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away:" but charity only remains, and goes to heaven with us. So I say of this duty,—'Praise only, of all the services we perform to God here, goes along with us to heaven.' There is no praying, no hearing, no receiving sacraments there,—nothing but praising, lauding, and celebrating, God: and that is the work of saints and angels to all eternity. Amen.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 8.



# A S E R M O N<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED ON

NOVEMBER 5, 1661.

DAN. x. 21.

*And there is none, that holdeth with me in these things,  
but Michael, your prince.*

THE words of an angel ; and strange, because of the singularity spoken of in them. But one angel, and Michael, to stand for the people of God ? Where are all the heavenly host in such a pinch ? At first sight, the words are obscure ; —we must clear them,—first, by the context ; secondly, by the thing itself.

In verse the second, Daniel is mourning three weeks ; and the reason of it was, because of the hindering the building of the temple<sup>b</sup> ; “ Then ceased the work of the house of God, which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia.” It was hindered several years ; but it was only three weeks before Daniel had comfortable tidings of it. That is called ‘ one-and-twenty days,’ ver. 13 ; “ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia, withstood me one-and-twenty days.” By ‘ prince of Persia,’ some understand the ‘ tutelar angel,’ as if angels fought with angels ; but he means the king of Persia, Artaxerxes. So verse 20 ; “ Now will I return to fight with him.”

Here observe God’s dispensing. Daniel’s prayer must first make way for victory. God intended good concerning his temple and his people ; but gave not commission to the angel Gabriel, till Daniel had prayed ; and then he goes out. Here a wheel on earth moves the wheel in heaven. Such power hath the prayer of the faithful, and such delight hath God in their prayers, that he takes, as it were, the watchword from them.

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1163.

<sup>b</sup> Ezra, iv. 24.



Where is praying to angels? Had Daniel done so, what would it have availed, since this angel had not yet his commission?

Well, now he hath, upon Daniel's prayers. I shall not question, whether he had knowledge of his success before. If I should say, he had not, it would be no solecism,—since the will of God is revealed to angels, not all at once, but as they are to be employed. And observe that in Mark xiii. 32; “Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man; no, not the angels, which are in heaven.” But I shall not insist on that.

Now, he hath knowledge of the will of God, and his commission to fight against the king of Persia. And here we may understand a parallel phrase, Judg. v. 20; “They fought from heaven; the stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera.” Angels are called ‘stars;’ Job xxxviii. 7, “When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

Well, he goes to fight with the king of Persia; but he goes alone. “None holdeth with me.”—Where are the thousands of angels? there were many against Sisera; and none here? Is not the cause the same? Jacob to have an army of angels<sup>b</sup>, and the whole people of God but one? Where are they, or where is their mind? The meaning is not tending this way: not but that the angels are ready always to help and stand up for God's people. But the meaning is, that God would do this work by himself. Only Michael must do it by his angel, מַיְכָאֵל “Not one, either man or angel, must serve for this, but Michael, your prince, stands with me, and that is enough.”

That, by ‘Michael,’ is meant ‘Christ,’ this very place evidenceth, in that he is called “your prince.” For who is the prince of the church but Christ? And, chap. xii. 1, he is called “the great prince.” And, in Rev. xii, mention is made of ‘Michael and the dragon;’ that is, Christ and Satan. He is called the “archangel,” Jude ver. 9. And so, 1 Thess. iv. 16, “The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel:” which, elsewhere<sup>c</sup>, is expressed, “shall hear the voice of the Son of God.” He is the ‘archangel’ in two respects; either as the chief angel, or messenger, that ever God employed,—or, as chief, or head,

<sup>b</sup> Gen. xxxii. 2.

<sup>c</sup> John, v. 25.



of the angels. As ἀρχιερεὺς is a chief-priest, or the chief of priests.

So that hence the meaning is clear: ‘I will go fight with the prince of Persia; and Michael, or Christ, is with me; and so the work shall be done miraculously, without any other strength; for no other needeth.’ In the words, then, may two things be observed:—

I. That Christ standeth for his people.

II. That if he stand for them,—no matter, though there be no other.

As the apostle speaks, “If he be with us, who can be against us?” so may we say, “If he be with us, no matter whether there be any other for us.” I might speak here of the ministration of angels; but that I shall wave at present, and fix upon this doctrine,—

‘That Christ sets himself against them, that set themselves against religion.’

The truth of the doctrine will appear here in the text, and in this day’s commemoration. The king of Persia thought, he might do what he would with the Jews, who were now his own people. He had information against them, that their city had been ‘rebellious,’ and ‘hurtful unto kings and provinces,’ and, thereupon, forbade the building it<sup>d</sup>. But yet Michael, their prince, takes their part against the prince of Persia. So they, for our deliverance from whom this day is celebrated,—what sought they? Who defeated them, if Christ had not been on our side? We need not particular proofs. Look into the Scripture, and into story: who ever opposed religion, and prospered? Christ is a stone to bruise his enemies to powder.

Now, the reason of this is, first, Because religion is Christ’s own child, of his begetting, and he will defend it. He created it in the beginning, and he will maintain it to the end. Secondly, Because opposing religion is the highest wickedness. Other wickedness may be of weakness, or for the satisfaction of the flesh; but this is the direct part of the devil, and direct opposition of Christ. Thirdly, Because Christ delights in religion. He dwelt upon the ark; he walked in the candlesticks. “The zeal of thine house (saith he) hath eaten me up.” And there are two things in religion, that make him take this pleasure in it; the one is,

<sup>d</sup> Ezra, iv.



that it glorifies him; and the other, that it tends to the saving of souls.

Of this discourse we may make this use:—first, To tremble to oppose soul-saving religion. Secondly, We may see the certain enduring and continuance of it, because Christ defends it. And, thirdly, We may learn to what to ascribe our deliverance this day: “Not to us, not to us, but to thy name, give the glory.” In Scripture, God’s gracious dealing with his people is ascribed to his mercy, and to his name; and to that alone must the glory of this our deliverance be given also.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

ELY, NOVEMBER 5, 1669.

REV. XIII. 2.

*And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat,  
and great authority.*

IT is recorded of Hannibal, that great commander and enemy of Rome, that, being but a youth, he put himself under an oath before the altar, of maintaining a perpetual enmity against that city. And he proved as big as his word and oath. This day may justly call upon England, to engage in such a feud and hostility against the same city. For on this day, she proclaimed open feud and hostility against England. This day she showed, that her doctrine, and practice, and church, is not to be reconciled to: her doctrine, destruction,—her practice, murder,—her charity, cruelty,—her piety, barrels of powder. In a word, as Joab to David<sup>b</sup>, “Thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and we all had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.” This day she declared, that she regarded neither princes nor servants, who this day may perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and we had all died,—if Popery might have lived, though all England had perished,—she had liked it well; and, indeed, that was her great desire, and great design.

The day commemorates a devilish plot, and a divine deliverance, and the work of the day very suitable is, as to render all our praises and thanksgivings possible to the Author of our deliverance,—so to whet our detestation against the author of such a plot and design. To help on this latter, I have chosen these words, that I have read, that out of them I may lay before you the picture of that city, that fathered and fostered such a plot; and the sight of that, may help on

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1165.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. xix. 6.



the former, and set an edge upon our thanksgivings, when we see from whom, and from what, we were delivered.

The words that I have read, I look upon as one of the most remarkable passages in this book, which book hath not a few passages very remarkable; 'That the devil should give his seat, and authority, and power, to Rome.' For that, by the 'dragon,' is meant the 'devil,' there is none can doubt: and that by the 'beast' spoken of here, and whose story runs on through the greatest part of the book, is meant 'Rome,' needs not much proving; for Romanists themselves do not deny it. Before I proceed farther, I cannot but remember and mention two things, which are recorded by Roman historians themselves concerning their city:—

I. They tell you, that the proper name of Rome was a great secret, and that very few knew it, and that it was not to be uttered. And Pliny tells you of a man, that was put to death, for calling Rome by its secret proper name. Our apocalyptic doth not mention Rome by name in all this book, but truly he gives it its very proper and significant name; one while calling it Babylon<sup>b</sup>,—another while, Egypt and Sodom<sup>c</sup>. And what qualities of Babylon, Egypt and Sodom were, every one very well knows.

II. Those historians tell you, that, whereas it was commonly known, under what tutelar god or deity other cities were,—some, under Mars,—some, under Jupiter,—some, under Hercules,—it was utterly unknown, who was the tutelar god of Rome. Our apocalyptic here resolved that scruple; he tells you, who is the patron and deity of that city, under whose tutelage and guardianship it is,—viz. of the dragon, the old serpent, the devil, who gives "his seat and power and great authority" to it. For that 'Rome' is meant here, and all along through divers chapters forward, is not only the consent and opinion of ancient fathers, not only of Protestants,—but the very Romanists themselves grant it, if you will but grant the distinction betwixt imperial and papal, heathen and Christian. And, indeed, our apostle hath so plainly characterized it, that it cannot be denied, that he means that city.

In chap. xvii. 9, he telleth, that the 'scarlet whore,' that is 'drunk with the blood of the saints, sitteth on seven mountains,' which is the very character of Rome in her own

<sup>b</sup> Rev. xvii. 18.

<sup>c</sup> Rev. xi. 8.



poets and historians, and they reckon the seven mountains by name, on which the city stood; and, at ver. 18, he saith, "The whore which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Now, he is a mere stranger to history, that knoweth not, that Rome, when John wrote this Revelation, ruled all kings and kingdoms; and even any one may gather so much from Luke ii. 1, where it is said, "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed:" meaning only the Roman empire, which is reputed there, as ruling and spreading over all the world. Divers more demonstrations might be given; but they need not, since Papists themselves cannot but grant it. So that the subject of the matter in the text, thus understood, yields us this clear doctrine and demonstration;—

That Rome is the devil's seat, his deputy and vicegerent: one that the devil hath invested in his own throne and power, and set it as vice-devil upon earth. "And can any good thing come out of such a Nazareth as this?" It is no wonder, if fire and gunpowder, mischief and destruction, come from this city, when it is, as it were, the deputy-hell, that the devil hath constituted on earth, to act his authority and power. "Glorious things are spoken of the city of God<sup>d</sup>;" but what things are to be spoken of the city of the devil? I shall not fetch colours any where from abroad, to paint out its blackness, though histories relate infinitely horrid actions of it, as black as hell; I shall only use those colours, that are afforded by the Scripture, and take my discourse only from within the compass of that.

When you read of the devil's "showing Christ all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them," do you not presently conceive, that he showed him Rome, and her dominion and glory? For there was no glory and pomp on earth then, comparable to her glory and pomp. And when you read, that he said, "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down," &c; that he offered to make him Cæsar; and when he saith, "For that is mine, and to whomsoever I will, I give it,"—how agreeable is it with the text, that that 'seat, authority, and power,' was the dragon's, but he gave it to that beast? It is not so said of the other monarchies, that had gone before. It is not so said of Babylon, Greece, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Psal. lxxxvii. 3.



that the devil gave them their power and authority, as it is said of Rome in this place; nor, indeed, could it so properly be said of them, as I shall observe afterward.

And here, I doubt, the fifth-monarchy man is foully mistaken in his reckoning, when he accounts the fifth monarchy to be the kingdom of Christ, whereas, indeed, the fifth monarchy was this kingdom of the devil. In the second and seventh chapters of Daniel, you read of the "four monarchies," and all destroyed before Christ came in the flesh, as is apparently to be observed there. They were the Babylonian, Mede-Persian, Grecian, and Syro-grecian; and after them rose the fifth, this of the Roman. And, which is observable, and which may be observed out of Roman records, it began most properly to be a monarchy that very year, that our Saviour was born, as might be showed out of Dion, &c. if material; and so Christ and this Roman beast were born and brought forth at the very same time.

Well, the devil gave his seat and power to this beast, this city. If you look for any thing but devilishness and mischief from it, you look for grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles. True, there was, in the beginning of the gospel, a flock of Christ there holy, and their faith famous<sup>e</sup>; but, poor men, they were underlings, and of no power. We speak of Rome in its pomp and power, acting in its authority and dominion, as it ruled over all the world; and as it was invested in the authority and seat of the dragon himself.

And why did the devil give his seat, and power, and great authority, to it? You may easily guess for what,—viz. that it should be an enemy to that and them, to whom he himself was chiefly an enemy,—Christ, and his gospel, and his people. We cannot say, that Rome conquered nations and subdued kingdoms by the power of the dragon, so properly, as that Rome fought against Christ and his gospel and people by the power of the dragon. And this was the very end, why the dragon gave him his seat and power. And that city hath done that work for her lord and master, the dragon, as faithfully, zealously, constantly, as the dragon himself could have done. For, indeed, the spirit of the dragon hath all along acted her, and been in her.

The first cast of her office for her master, and which shows what she would do all along for him, was, that she

<sup>e</sup> Rom. i. 8.



murdered Christ himself, the Lord of life. I said before, that it is not said of the monarchies before, that “the dragon gave his power, and his seat, and great authority, to them;” nor, indeed, could it so properly be said of them, as of Rome: for the dragon had something for Rome to do, which they did not, could not, viz. to murder the Saviour of the world, the Lord of glory. In Rev. xi. 3. 8, where mention is made of the ‘witnesses’ prophesying,’ and ‘being martyred,’ it is said, “Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which, spiritually, is called Sodom and Egypt, where, also, our Lord was crucified.” When you hear of the ‘city, where our Lord was crucified,’ you will think of Jerusalem; but when you hear of the ‘great city,’ this apostle teaches us to look at Rome. And who cannot but observe that, which our Saviour himself saith concerning himself<sup>e</sup>, “The Son of man shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him and put him to death?” Who was it that so spitefully entreated, and put to death, the Son of God? The Gentiles.—And who were those Gentiles? The evangelists tell you who: Pilate, the Roman governor, and the Roman soldiers; and that by the authority and tyranny of Rome, and in the cause of Rome, that would have no king but Cæsar. There were two nations, that had a hand in the conspiracy of Christ’s murder,—the Jew and the Roman; and whether of them deeper in the murder? The evangelists tell, and the Jews themselves tell, that the Roman must do it, or it could not be done: “Pilate said unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law; the Jews, therefore, said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death<sup>f</sup>:” therefore, thou must do it, or it will not be done.—And he did it.

And now, as Hannibal’s father brought him to an altar, and engaged him in an oath to be an enemy to Rome,—so let me bring your thoughts to Christ’s cross, and engage your hearts in such another enmity. Christian, it was Rome that murdered thy Saviour; and need I to say any more? As oft as you read, repeat the history of our Saviour’s bitter passion,—remember Rome; for it was Rome that caused him so to suffer, and Pontius Pilate brought him to it by the authority of Rome. And the very frame of the article in the

<sup>e</sup> Luke, xviii. 32, 33.

<sup>f</sup> John, xviii. 31.



Creed, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate," hints you to observe and remember such a thing. For if it had meant to intimate Christ's sufferings only, it had been enough to have said, 'He suffered,' without saying any more; but when it saith, 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate,' it calls you to think of that power and tyranny, by which he suffered, viz. the power and tyranny of Rome, which Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, acted and exercised.

And here let us argue with a Romanist, according to the cue of his own logic: he saith, 'Peter was at Rome,' &c. 'Ergo.' We argue likewise, 'Pilate was at Jerusalem,' &c. 'Ergo.' Here was a sad beginning,—and that which speaks plainly, why it was that the devil made Rome his deputy, and invested it in his seat and power, viz. that it might murder his great enemy, the Lord Christ. And this was but too plain a prognostic, what it would do to the members of Christ in succeeding generations:—which how it did, there are so many thousand stories written in blood, that I need not to mention them.

I might begin with the ten persecutions, raised by the heathen emperors against the professors of Christ and his gospel: wherein so many thousand poor Christians were destroyed with the most exquisite torments, that could be invented; and whereby that city and empire showed, how zealously it wrought for its master, and would not spare the dry tree, when it had cut down the green,—would not spare Christ in his members, who had so little spared himself in his own person.

But a Papist will say, 'True, indeed; heathen Rome was even as you say; but Papal Rome is of another kind of temper. It is the church of Christ, the mother-church, the chief of churches. It was Babylon, and Sodom, and Egypt, in the heathen emperor's time, and the seat of the devil; but, under the Popes, it is Jerusalem, Sion, and the city of God.'

I. I should ask him, that pleads thus, one question; and ere ever I should turn Romanist, I would be resolved of; but I doubt, the infallible chair itself is not able to resolve it; and that is this:—Whence it is, that, since the Jew, that had a hand in murdering Christ, hath laid under a curse ever since, and hath been utterly cast off of God for it, and is like to be to the end; how comes it to pass, that the Ro-



man, that had a hand as deep in that horrid act, if not deeper,—should be so blessed, as to be the only people and church of God? That Jerusalem, for that fact, should be a curse, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation; and that Rome, that was as guilty every whit, should be a blessing, a renown, and the prime church of all churches?—Let a Papist solidly unriddle me this; and he says something.

II. And to speak to what he pleads, we may first answer with that common saying, ‘*Ubi lex non distinguit,*’ &c; ‘what the word of God doth not distinguish,’ we are not to make any distinction about; but of any differences of qualities betwixt Rome heathen and Papal, the word of God doth not distinguish, unless it show the Papal to be the worse of the two. In this chapter, indeed, it distinguishes of the change of state and government from imperial to pontifical; but for mischievousness and abomination there is no such distinction: Rome heathen, in the beginning of the chapter, is “a beast like a leopard, with feet like a bear, and a mouth like a lion:” and Rome Papal, at ver. 11, “a beast like a lamb, but it speaks like a dragon, and exerciseth all the power of the former beast,” and is not behind it a whit in wickedness and cruelty. A lamb in show,—but a dragon, a devil, in speech,—and the very former beast in demeanour; the former beast had the mouth of a lion,—this, of a dragon; the former, bad,—this, worse. And look but at several places, that speak of this city,—and you find, they speak of it without any such distinction of quality, but that Rome all along is herself, i. e. stark naught till her latter end, and till she perish.

I. The first time you meet with any hint of Rome in Scripture, is Num. xxiv. 24: “And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.” Where, by ‘Chittim,’ that ‘Rome and Italy’ are meant, it is the consent both of Jews and Christians, both of Protestants and Papists; and the very intent and story of the passage doth so enforce it to be taken. And the words show, how ships and soldiers from Rome should afflict and conquer Assyria, who had been once the great afflicter,—and that they should afflict and conquer Heber, or the Hebrews, the afflicted people,—yea, afflict Christ, the chief child of Heber; for Rome, as I said, put him to death. All which, history



showeth to be most true. "And he also," that is, Chittim, Rome, or Italy, "shall perish for ever." The word '*also*' parallels her perdition with Amalek, of which there is mention, ver. 20; "Amalek was the first of the nations;" that is, 'he was the first of the nations, that fought against Israel<sup>s</sup>;' and that nation "shall perish for ever." So Chittim, or Rome, is the last of the nations, that shall afflict Heber and the Israel of God; "and he also shall perish for ever." Now, do you find any such distinction here, as that Rome Papal should be holy, blessed, and the most excellent church in the world,—when the conclusion, the period of Chittim, is, that "he shall perish for ever?"

II. And the last time, that there is discourse in Scripture of Rome, it makes this distinction, indeed, of the state and government of it,—that Rome heathen is the beast, and Papal is the false prophet, but it leaves both under the same condemnation, and perishing for ever, Rev. xix. 20; "And the beast was taken and the false prophet: and both these were taken, and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

III. Antichrist, in Scripture, is characterized under the character of apostasy, or falling away from the truth; "There must be a falling away first, and then the man of sin shall be revealed<sup>b</sup>." And Rev. ix. 1, "I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit: and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth," &c. He that lets hell loose, and 'opens the bottomless pit,' and lets out smoke that darkeneth all the world, and lets out locusts that devour all before them, he is a star, a churchman, an angel, a minister of the church (as chap. i. 20, 'The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches'); but a star 'fallen from heaven,' a minister apostatized and revolted from the truth; or else he would not rightly resemble his father the devil, who 'abode not in the truth,' but fell from it, and became an enemy. Now, let any one judge, whether Rome heathen or Papal, be this apostatized wretch,—and whether of them hath departed from the truth. Rome heathen never embraced the truth, and so

<sup>s</sup> Exod. xvii.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.



could never fall from it; Rome Papal hath done it, with a witness.

IV. And lastly, That much mistaken place, in Rev. xx. 2, speaks to this very tenor we are upon. First, The “old dragon, which is the devil and Satan, is bound by Christ a thousand years, that he should no more deceive the nations,” ver. 3. The old serpent had deceived the nations, τὰ ἔθνη, the ‘heathen,’ for above two thousand years, with idolatry, false miracles, false oracles, and with all blindness of superstition. Now Christ, sending the gospel by his apostles and ministers among the heathen, or Gentiles, bound the devil and imprisoned him, curbed his power and delusion, that he should not deceive the world in manner as he had done; but the world now becomes Christian, and heathenism is done away: and this is there called ‘the first resurrection,’—viz. the resurrection of the dead heathen; as Ephes. ii. 1, “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” And John v. 25, “The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live.” Well; thus the ‘devil is bound a thousand years,’ during which time the gospel runs through the world, and prevails, and makes it Christian. At ver. 7, the devil is let loose again; and, by Popery, he makes the world as blind, deluded, heathenish, as it had been in the worst times under heathenism. And it were no hard thing, out of history, to show, that Rome Papal did equal, nay, exceed, Rome heathen, in all blindness, wickedness, cruelty, uncleanness, and in all manner of abomination. But an hour, a day, a week, would not serve the turn to describe that full parallel. The text gives a full summary of all, though in few words, when it tells us, that the dragon, the devil, “gave his power, seat, and authority,” to Rome; and it hath, and doth, and will act, in that spirit, while it is Rome: and can any thing but mischief be expected from such a spirit?

This day’s memorial is evidence enough, instead of more. A plot and design of cruelty and horridness, that Rome heathen could never show its parallel. And the old Roman valour, though cruel enough, yet would have been ashamed to have been so murderous, in so base and undermining a manner.

And now, ‘sursum corda,’ ‘lift up your hearts unto the



Lord.'—'It is very meet, and right, and our bounden duty' so to do, upon consideration of our deliverance, and upon consideration from whom and what we were delivered. "Let us fall into the hands of the Lord (saith David), and not into the hands of men." Where had we been, had we fallen into the hands of these men? Blessed, ever blessed, be our God, that he did take us into his own hand and protection; or else poor England had dwelt in silence. Imagine, in your thoughts, that you saw that, which your hearts abhor to imagine, the cursed plot to have taken place and effect: as Abraham, from the hills of Hebron, saw the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrha ascend up to heaven, like the smoke of a furnace. Imagine, that you had seen king, parliament, religion, England, going up in fire and smoke, and destroyed and come to nothing: can our hearts but quake and tremble at the only imagination of such a sight? Oh! what great things hath God done for us, that we neither saw it, nor heard of it! "Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we rejoice."

They show how sensible they are, from what and from whom they are delivered, that sing so triumphantly, and praise God so heartily, upon the fall of Babylon [Rev. xix. 1]: and they intimate, what a vexation, a curse, a plague, that was to the world, while it stood,—when they so were ravished with joy, when it is taken away. "After these things (saith the Apocalyptic) I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and honour, and glory, and power, unto the Lord our God. For he hath judged the great whore, that corrupted the earth, &c. And again, they said Alleluia" (ver. 3); and again, "Amen; Alleluia" (ver. 4). They never think they can say enough for such a deliverance of them from so mischievous a vexer and enemy.

The word 'Hallelujah' is frequently, in David's Psalms, rendered, 'Praise ye the Lord.' Ye first meet with it at the latter end of Psalm civ; where the Jews' note upon it is not impertinent,—viz. "That Hallelujah comes not, till there be tidings of the ruin and destruction of ungodly men:" and such you have in the last verse of that Psalm, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more: bless thou the Lord, O my soul. *Hallelujah.*" Ye have the like in that place of Revelation; the wicked de-



stroyed,—Babylon, Babylon no more, but ruined, fired, ‘and her smoke goeth up for ever and ever:’ and then are the mouths of all the church of God filled with ‘*Hallelujahs*,’ ‘praising of the Lord,’ for so great deliverance.

When Babylon shall be destroyed, I shall not go about to prophesy; too many have lost themselves in that boldness and curiosity: but when the plots of Babylon have been destroyed, especially such a one as this was, which would have destroyed us all; when such brats of Babylon are dashed against the stones; we know not what Babylon is, nor what our own interest is, if our mouths be not filled with *Hallelujahs*, and our hearts with the praises of the Lord. Where had England been by this time, if the plot designed had taken effect? We had been, by this time, like the Syrians, blindfold in the midst of Samaria; our eyes blinded with the smoke of the bottomless pit, that we should never have seen the light of that truth and gospel, that we now behold. Blindness, and ignorance, and superstition, had been entailed upon us to all generations.

“Except the Lord had been on our side, now may Israel say, Except the Lord had been on our side, when men rose up against us,—they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased with us. This is a day, which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

ELY, NOVEMBER 5, 1670.

REV. XX. 7, 8.

*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison: and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: whose number is as the sand of the sea.*

A VERY sad story and heavy news: Satan loose, Gog and Magog in arms, nations deceived, and a numberless army mustered, and going forth to battle against the ‘camp of the saints,’ and the ‘beloved city,’ as it is related in the verse following. It is no wonder, if there go before such a rout as this, such a proclamation, as you have, chap. xii. 12; “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea; for the devil is come out among you, having great wrath;” aye, and having a ‘great army’ too. And as Balaam<sup>b</sup> complains, “Alas! who shall live, when the Lord doth this?” so may we; ‘Alas! who shall live, when the devil doth this, and the Lord suffer him?’—You cannot blame Elisha’s servant, when he saw the city where he was, beset round about with Syrians,—if he cried out, “Alas! master, what shall we do?” If the matter of the text have any relation to our times, we have much reason to make such a crying out, ‘Alas! men and brethren, what shall we do?’ And whether the things concern our times, we shall search as we go along.

You see, in the text, the monster Goliath, and his uncircumcised Philistines, marching against the poor Israel of God: and, if God be not with them, what will become of them? Now, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for that he hath set such a memorial upon this day, as he hath done, and written, as it were, upon it, “Emmanuel, God with us.” For, ‘If the Lord hath not been on our side, now may *England*

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2, p. 1170.

<sup>b</sup> Num. xxiv.



say, If the Lord had not been on our side, when these enemies rose up against us,—they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so enraged against us.’ For that those, that then contrived our destruction, were of Satan’s army,—I believe, none but they themselves will be so senseless as to deny: and that they were of Gog and Magog’s regiments, the design itself, and the truth itself, makes undeniable.

That may seem something in consistence with the text, which the apostle speaks, Eph. vi. 12; “We have not to fight against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world.” But the text tells, that we have to fight against them, and against flesh and blood too; against Satan, and against Gog and Magog’s army also. But the apostle understands the word *only*; which, if spoken out, makes the sense clear, and reconciles him and our apocalyptic very well and very easily together: “We have not to fight against flesh and blood only, but against principalities,” &c. And such manner of speech is no rare thing in Scripture, as might be showed by several instances, if I would insist upon it.

And all the world is inevitably put upon this dilemma,—either thou must be of Satan’s army, or must fight against Satan’s army, and expect it to fight against thee. That, therefore, may seem a hard case, that God, from the beginning, put enmity between the devil and men<sup>c</sup>; “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.” And was there any need of this? Had not the devil spite and enmity enough against men, without God’s putting enmity between them? Yes, enough and enough again; but man had not enmity enough against the devil. He had been too much friends with him, in hearkening to him, obeying him, complying with him to the violating God’s command, and the undoing of all mankind; and should he still continue in that compliance with him, there were no hope of recovery, no way but eternal ruin. Therefore, it was a most comfortable and happy passage, when God himself takes on him to dissolve this society, and to set them at odds,—that the seed of the woman should set the devil at defiance, be an enemy to him, and fight against him,—and, at last, through God’s strength and good assistance, tread him under foot.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. iii. 15.



But they must look for as sharp dealing from him, as possible. If they will be enemies to him, and not obedient and compliant, he will be an enemy to them to some purpose,—and omit nothing, that may tend to their ruin, whether subtilty or strength. For he hath his deceivings and his army, in the text; and he hath his deceivings and his strength, in his temptations and assaults.

I need not to spread before you the parts of the text; they lie so plain in their several clauses. The task before us is rather to explain them; which we shall assay to do in the method and order, as they lie.

I. And, first, the first clause, “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed,” recalls us to the third verse of the chapter, where “Satan is bound for a thousand years.” There, bound,—here, loosed; there, bound for a thousand years,—here, the thousand years are expired; there, bound and imprisoned, that he should not deceive the nations,—and here, loosed, he goes out to deceive the nations again.

I doubt a millenary and I should scarce agree about the explication of this Scripture. He looks for the thousand years yet to come; I make no doubt, but they are long since past and ended. He thinks Satan shall be chained up, that he shall not persecute or trouble the church; when the text tells you plainly, that his chaining up was, that ‘he should not deceive the nations.’ And there is a great deal of difference between ‘persecuting’ and ‘deceiving,’ between the ‘church’ and the ‘nations.’

Do but call to thoughts, how the devil deceived the nations, or the ‘heathen’ (for that English word of ours is the very Greek word εἰδω used in the text), to worship idols,—or, as the Scripture phraseth it, “to worship devils,” to believe lying oracles, false miracles, to account the highest profaneness to be religion: as, the prostitution of their bodies in fornication, to be divine adoration,—offering their children to Moloch, to be devotion,—sacrificing men and women, to be zeal,—and to bury men quick, to be a blessed atonement: I say, do but call to remembrance, how the devil thus deceived the nations, before the gospel came among them; and you may easily perceive, what is meant by the “great angel’s binding the old serpent, the devil,” and imprisoning him, that he should not deceive the nations,



or Gentiles, as he had ;—viz. Christ, sending his gospel among them, did, by the power and prevalency of it, curb, restrain, and chain up, the devil's power and activity from cheating so abominably, as he had done hitherto. For the gospel cast down their idolatry, silenced their oracles, dissolved their miracles, and curbed those abominations, that had reigned before : as those, that are any whit acquainted with history, do very well know,—and those that but read the Bible, cannot be ignorant of. And thus he bound the devil, that he should not deceive the nations.

II. Secondly ; His binding and imprisoning is said to be “for a thousand years :”—which may be taken allusively or determinately.

1. Allusively, or speaking according to the common opinion of the Jewish nation : which conceiveth, that the kingdom and reign of Messias should be a thousand years ; as it were easy to show, in their own authors, abundantly. And so the apocalyptic may be conceived to speak according to their common opinion, that he may the better speak to their capacity : and that, speaking by things familiarly received and known, he might intimate his mind more feelingly to their apprehensions. But withal he explains, what is meant by Christ's reigning,—viz. in and by the power of the gospel conquering nations to the obedience of the truth, and subduing Satan from his cheating and deluding them, as he had done.

Now, the Scripture speaking so much of Christ's kingdom, and reigning among the Gentiles by the gospel ; that gospel subduing the power of Satan among them, and bringing them to subjection under Christ's sceptre : and the Jews holding that Messias's kingdom should be a thousand years : our evangelist relates to the former, and alludes to the latter, that he may the better be understood, when he saith, “Satan was bound a thousand years,” and “the saints of Christ reigned with him a thousand years.”

2. You may take the time determinately, and that very properly, for just so long a time. And begin from the time, that the gospel was first sown by the apostles among the heathen, and count a thousand years forward, and you have them ending in the depth and darkness of Popery : when Satan was let loose again,—and the world and nations cheated and deceived by him into as gross ignorance, pal-



pable darkness, horrid idolatry, ridiculous belief of forged miracles and oracles, and committing all manner of abominations,—as ever the heathen had been deceived and cheated by him before.

The gospel, from the first preaching of it among the Gentiles, had now gone through all nations, and by it the world was made Christian; and all people, and nations, and languages, were come to the acknowledgment of it,—when up comes Popery in the west, as Mahometism in the east,—and overspreads the world with a universal darkness, that it becomes as blind, superstitious, deluded, heathenish, as ever it had been. And that ‘Popery’ is more peculiarly here meant, whereby Satan deceived the nations, as much as ever he had deceived the nations under heathenism,—besides that the calculation of the time, taken determinately, doth help to argue,—the main scope of this book, from chap. xiii hitherto, doth also evince: which is, to speak of Rome, or the western Babylon, and, as it were, to write her story.

III. Thus, according to the first clause in the text, “When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed:” upon which passage and providence, we cannot but stand and muse a little; to see Barabbas, the villain and murderer, let out of prison, and at liberty again. Can you but wonder at it, that such a horrid villain as he should not be kept fast, when he was caught and laid fast?

That Satan did break prison, and loose himself from his bands, I suppose, none can imagine, that remember that Christ laid him up; and Christ was too strong and too watchful to let such a prisoner escape from him, whom he had so fast. And the very expression in the text, “Satan was loosed from his prison,” hints, that he got not loose himself, but was loosed by him, that had tied him up.

And this, in some reflection, may speak comfort,—that the devil, whom God hath in a chain, is not at his own disposal and liberty, but that God restrains or enlarges, binds or looses him, at his pleasure. He reserves him in chains of the darkness of his wrath and displeasure, that he shall not finally escape him; and he hath him in the chains of his providence and disposal, that, at his pleasure, he curbs and restrains him, rage he never so much, and be he never so furious.



But there are two things here, that are a just cause of sadness, for this one of comfort.

First; That Christ should let him loose, when he had him fast, seeing with him there is nothing but mischief. Had he broke loose, it had been another matter; but that Christ should loose him, it is something the more bitter to think of, as it is very well worth the thinking of. Let me relate this story for answer to this strangeness: When the cruel and bloody Phocas was emperor of Greece, and the church and kingdom lay under very much sadness and affliction under so wretched a ruler; a good and holy man, in his zeal and devotion, made bold to question God, Why he had set so wicked a governor over his people? And he received this answer, "That Phocas, indeed, was as vile and wicked a ruler as could be set over them, but that the sins of the people had deserved, that such a tyrant should be set over them." If any one, in like zeal and bitterness of spirit, should be so bold as to question Christ; 'Lord Jesus, why shouldest thou let Satan loose, when thou hadst him fast,—seeing thou knewest, that he, being loose, would only do mischief, and destroy?'—He might very well receive this most true and just answer, 'That it is, indeed, a very woful thing, that Satan should be let loose, to go and deceive the nations, and to lead them into blindness and error; but the nations had deserved, that they should be so served.'—And let the apostles be the Lord's interpreters, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,—therefore God sent them strong delusions, the great deluder, that they might believe a lie<sup>b</sup>."

God had chained Satan, that he should not deceive them, in that he had brought in the gospel among them: "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." The world grew wanton with the gospel, and toyed with it. They prized it not as they should; improved it not as they should; slighted the truth; embraced error; followed their own ways and follies. Therefore, saith Christ (as it is in Isa. lxvi. 4), "'I also will choose their delusions,' to give them up to them; and because 'decipi vult hic populus, decipiatur:'—therefore, among them, Satan, and let them have enough of falsehood, deceiving, and delusion, because this people love to have it so."

Wantoning with the word of God, and dallying with the

<sup>b</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 10.



gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is but too justly punished with the loss of it, and with removing the candlestick out of its place,—if men care not to walk by the light of the candle. When men will shut their eyes against the light, it is no wonder, if God make them dwell in darkness. This is one sad business, that Satan is thus let loose to deceive; but, behold! a second woe cometh after it,—viz.

Secondly, That he being thus loosed, you never find, that he is bound again. He had been loose before, and was bound, but loosed here,—and, for aught we find, loosed ever. Read the chapter henceforward, and you find no end of his deceiving, till you find an end of his being. In the text, he is deceiving, and his army is mustered and marching against the beloved city: and what is the next news? ver. 9, “Fire came down from heaven, and devoured them:” and, ver. 10, “The devil, that deceived them, was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone.” Ask you, how long shall Satan be thus loose, and deceive? how long shall his army battle against the camps of the saints, and besiege the beloved city? The apocalyptic here tells you, ‘Till his army be destroyed by the fire of God’s vengeance from heaven, and till Satan himself be cast into fire and brimstone.’—A passage, which, I think, is very well worth their considering, which look for, and speak of, such golden and glorious times, yet to come before the end of the world.

IV. Fourthly, Satan loosed, you see, falls to his old trade again, of ‘deceiving the nations.’ A right jail-bird, indeed; a thief, that, delivered out of prison, falls to his old course of thieving again, and will not leave, till the gallows end him. Would you not think, that a thousand years’ imprisonment should have wrought some change in him, and amendment upon him? But, ‘bray a fool in a mortar,’ and he will come out a fool still. Satan is no changeling, but will be Satan still. Who, what, he is,—we shall have occasion to speak to more hereafter.

V. Fifthly, Among the deceived by him, Gog and Magog are particularly named. And what is meant by them is variously, and, by some, wildly guessed. I might make a long discourse concerning Gog and Magog, and tell you,

I. That the Jews, from Ezek. xxxviii, and xxxix, where there is a dreadful prophecy concerning Gog,—do hold, that such a dreadful enemy shall appear a little before Messias



shall appear, and that Elias shall come to fight with him; and they tell terrible things about the war of Gog, framed out of their own fancy.

2. That some Christians, by Gog and Magog, understand the 'Turk,'—some, the 'pope,'—some, both.

Not to trouble you with things more immaterial, our apocalyptic alludes to that Gog in Ezekiel; he means not the same person with that Gog there mentioned, but one of the same temper and qualities with him. So he calls<sup>d</sup> the city where our Lord was crucified, 'Sodom and Egypt,' because that city was a place of the like wickedness with them. Now, that Ezekiel, by Gog and the land of Magog, means the kingdom of the Syro-Grecians, or Greek-Syrian,—more especially Antiochus, the great persecutor of the Jews, and their religion,—might be copiously proved, both by the order of Ezekiel's prophecy, especially comparing that prophecy with the Book of Daniel, and by the story of that kingdom, and that king himself.

In all that large prophecy, I take up but ver. 17 of chap. xxxviii: "Art thou he, of whom I have spoken in old time, by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them?" His meaning is, "No, thou art not he. My prophets prophesied of the king of Assyria, and the king of Babylon, that these should come up against them, to avenge my quarrel upon them, and to be my scourge to punish them for their iniquities: but thou art an upstart, risen of thyself,—not to do my work, but to work against me, and against mine ordinances."—Read Dan. vii. 25, that speaks of this cursed king: "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hands for a time," &c. And, of the same wretch, and the same actions, speaks he, chap. xii. 11; "He took away the daily sacrifice, and set up the abomination, that maketh desolate." Upon which, he that readeth 1 Macc. i, will find a large comment: that he enjoined, upon pain of death, the Jews to take up the manner of the heathen, not to circumcise their children, not to use the law; that he caused abominable things to be offered on the altar; idols and groves to be set; and, in a word, not to use their own reli-

<sup>d</sup> Rev. xi. 8.



gion upon pain of death. The like may be read of him in Josephus, and other authors; and that not only he, but other kings of the same kingdom, bore the same enmity, and exercised the same persecution, against the Jews and their religion.

This is that Gog and land of Magog, that Ezekiel speaks of, so bitter and grievous enemies unto Israel. To him our apocalyptic alludes in this place; and speaking of a kingdom and party of the like temper, and that imitated him in enmity, and persecuting the true religion, he useth the very same name; and meaneth, that Satan should deceive men into a false religion; that they should hate and persecute the true, as Gog and Magog, the Syro-grecians, and Antiochus, had once done. And be it pope, that he intends, or be it Turk, or both,—I do not dispute; but, by the current of the discourse along the whole chapter, to me the Papacy is plainly meant more especially; and how properly it belongs to Rome, sad experience hath so copiously evidenced, that I need not to insist on any parallel. About the fortieth year of Christ, the gospel was brought among the Gentiles; then Satan began to be bound and imprisoned, that he should not deceive the heathen, as he had done. Count a thousand years thence, and look what times were in the world about the year of Christ 1040; and methinks, I see the world turned purely heathen again, for blindness, and superstition, and idolatry; that Satan was then plainly let loose, and the nations as much deceived then, as they were under heathenism, before Christ's coming.

One thing, by the way, may not be passed unobserved; that, in one sense, he was loose when he was bound,—and did a world of mischief one way, when he was tied up from doing mischief another. Within those thousand years, from the first going forth of the gospel among the Gentiles, counted thence forward, you find as bitter persecution of the gospel, as bloody murdering of the saints of God, as ever was in the world, till he was loosed again, and Popery fell to that trade afresh. Within the thousand years, that Satan is said to be imprisoned, were those ten bloody persecutions, that ecclesiastical history speaks of: in which so many hundred thousand precious Christians were horridly and barbarously murdered, for the profession of the truth. And is not the hand of Joab in all this? Had not Satan a hand in all that butchery? No, he was imprisoned. But can such mischief be



wrought, and Satan not there? All that persecution, and cruelty, and murder, committed,—and the great murderer from the beginning not there? By which very thing you may observe, that there is a great deal more danger in Satan's deceiving, than in his persecuting: for his persecuting is not here mentioned, while he is said to be tied up from deceiving.

Upon the whole, thus unfolded, we may observe these three things:—

I. That Satan's great work and business that he follows, is, to deceive.

II. That it is his great masterpiece to deceive in matter of religion.

III. That it is his ultimate refuge to raise persecution, when he cannot deceive.

How all these arise out of the text, I suppose, none but may easily observe. His work, before his imprisonment, was to deceive the nations; and he sets to the same again, when loosed from imprisonment. His deceiving of the nations, was by cheating them into false principles and practices of religion, heathenism before, and Papacy after. And when he cannot deceive the camp of the saints, and the beloved city, he hath his Gog and Magog, his army as the sand of the sea, to fight against.

I. Need I to spend much proof to show, that it is Satan's trade, and work, and business, that he follows, to deceive? It was the first thing he did, after he was Satan: "the serpent deceived me (saith Eve), and I did eat:" and he hath been doing the same ever since, and will be ever doing, whilst he is. He is a 'liar,' and 'the father of lies<sup>d</sup>.' And that very name and profession of his speaks cheating and deceit. There was a 'lying spirit' in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, to cheat both him and them; and there is a 'lying spirit' in the heart of thousands and thousands, to deceive and ruin them. "I fear, lest Satan have beguiled you, as he beguiled Eve," saith the apostle to some, that were a thousand-fold better than some thousands in the world.

How abundant proof of this, that it is Satan's work to deceive, might be fetched from Scripture! how abundant from experience! But what testimony would be given of this in hell? If it were asked there, 'Do you think, that Satan is a deceiver?' Oh! what a howl would be given up

<sup>d</sup> John, viii. 44.



of the attestation of this, felt by woful and miserable experience! "Oh! he hath deceived and cheated us all hither: he hath led us like the Syrians blindfold into Samaria, into the midst of their enemies; so us into this misery, merely with his cozening; and we never dreamed of any such thing.—He made me believe (says one), and to say in my heart, 'that there was no God,' and now I feel there is an angry one with a witness.—He cheated me (say others), to think the threatenings and curses of the word of God, were but bugbears to fright men; but now we feel them heavier than rocks and mountains. He cozened us to believe, that the pleasures of sin should never be changed, the contents of the flesh and the world should never have an end. And how sadly and miserably do we feel the contrary to our eternal sorrow! Oh! Satan, thou hast deceived us, and we have been deceived; thou hast proved stronger than we, and hast undone us."

For, indeed, Satan's strength lies in his cozenage: cut but these locks of his, like Samson's, and he is weak and can do little. Satan, with all his strength and power, cannot force any man to sin; and, therefore, his way is to cheat them to sin. If Satan could force any soul to sin, all souls must go to hell, and no flesh should be saved; for he would spare none:—but since he cannot force and compel the will, he cheats and cozens the understanding, and so persuades the will. The subtle serpent winds into the will and consent, by deceiving the fancy and intellect: as the apostle speaks of sin<sup>e</sup>, "Sin deceived me, and so slew me:" Satan deceives; and so destroys.

How he does insinuate, and inject his deceit and illusions upon the minds of men,—how he strikes fire, that the tinder of the soul may take some kindling,—is not so easy for discovery, as it is sad in experience. It is a depth of Satan hard to be known, as to his managing of it, but too well known in the effect and operation. I shall not, therefore, trouble you with any discourse upon that subject, though something might be said about it, both from philosophy and divinity.

II. It is a masterpiece of his cheating, to cheat men in matter of religion.—To deceive the nations with a false religion, instead of a true, as he did the heathen, before he was bound,—and as he hath done the greatest part of the world

<sup>e</sup> Rom. vii. 11.



with Popery and Mahometism, since he was let loose. As it is the great work of Christ to propagate the truth, and to promote the gospel, which is the great truth of God, and mystery of salvation; so Satan makes it his business to sow tares among the wheat,—to corrupt the truth as much as possible,—and to muddy the wholesome waters of religion, of which the sheep of Christ should drink, as much as he can, that no man may drink but dirt and puddle. As he himself “abode not in the truth<sup>f</sup>,” so he cannot abide, that men should abide in it, if he can prevent it. In 2 Cor. iv. 4, “The god of this world blindeth men’s minds, that the brightness of the gospel of the glory of Christ, should not shine to them.” The devil plays not the small game of cheating men of their money, of their lands and worldly interests, as men cheat one another; but of their religion, of the soundness of truth, of solid and wholesome principles. Whence else such idolatrous principles among the heathen? such damnable traditions among the Jews? such cursed heresies among Christians? The enemy hath done this, who cannot abide the fair growing of the wheat, but, if possible, he will choke it with tares. Do you not hear of “doctrines of devils,” 1 Tim. iv. 1, and of “damnable heresies,” 2 Pet. ii. 1? It is the devil’s damnable plot and design, to destroy men by their very principles of religion; to poison the fountains, out of which they should drink wholesome water,—that they drink death and damnation, where they should drink wholesome refreshing.

It is a cheat too sad, when the devil cozens men to the hurt of their souls, by their choosing and using things for their bodies’ outward condition; but it is a mastery of his delusions, when he cheats them in matters and principles of religion, which they choose and use for their souls. It is a great and a sad mastery of his, when he brings men to sin out of the very principles of their religion, to establish mischief by a law. As the vilest act, that ever was committed in the world,—viz. the crucifying the Lord of life,—the Jews did it out of the very principles of their traditional religion, which engaged them not to endure such a Messias. And the horrid fact, that this day commemorates, which even amazeth all stories, and the like to which no age or nation can produce or parallel,—they did it out of the very principles of

<sup>f</sup> John, viii.



their religion: their faith being faction, and their religion rebellion, as our churches have many a time heard that character of them.

It is not a trifling business for men, to take up principles and practices in religion, out of fancy, and humour, and self-conceit, though that hath been very much in fashion in our days. It is Satan's masterpiece of policy, to make men forsake the waters of Siloam, that run softly, and to dig themselves cisterns, that will hold no water,—and so to perish for thirst. Is it not a desperate cheat of Satan, that men should, out of principles of religion, refuse the public ministry; out of principles of religion, should rant, and become atheists; out of principles of religion, should do, as they were about to have done by us this day, to destroy those, that are not of the same principles and religion?

A sad thing, when that which should be a man's balm, becomes poison; and those things, which should have been for his greatest good, should turn to his greatest evil,—when his principles of religion become his greatest ruin. Surely, a very powerful cheat of Satan is there, when men choose darkness to be their light, poison their diet, and doctrines of devils to be their way of salvation. I shall only mind you of the apostle's counsel, 1 John iv. 1; “Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God: for many false prophets are come into the world.” And that of another apostle, “Prove all things, and hold that which is good;”—and, “Be not led away with every doctrine.”

III. The present occasion calls upon us to remember, what men, seduced by Satan, would have done to us; and what the God of truth and mercy hath done for us: and we cannot better do either, than with reflection upon religion. The text before us tells us, that Satan deceives all he can,—and musters an army of those, that he hath deceived, to fight against those, that will not be deceived. For ask that army, Why do you fight against the camp of the saints, and why do you besiege the beloved city? and what answer in the world can they give but this,—Because they will not be deceived by Satan, as we are?

And ask our gunpowder-plotters, Why do you go about to destroy king, parliament, and nation? What quarrel have you against them, that you would bring so horrid a ruin



upon them? What wrong have they done you, that you will take so severe and cruel a revenge?—‘Why, they will not be as we are, blind as we are blind, befooled and deceived, as we are befooled and deceived.’

A sad case, that a nation must be destroyed, because it will not be cheated by Satan; because it will not put out its own eyes, and choose to be blind and live in darkness, when it hath eyes and light. A doleful thing, that men should be killed, because they will not be fools. Think of the hundreds, that have gone to the fire and fagot, because they could not believe transubstantiation; because they could not believe that, which is contrary to reason, religion, and the trial of the senses,—therefore, they must be put to a most cruel death. Poor England, because she will not be Popish, must be no more; because she will not lose her wits, she must lose her life. Poor Abel must be murdered, because he will not be such a wretch, hypocrite, and villain, as Cain. This is all the quarrel they had against us, because we would not be of such a religion, as they are of,—and had no mind to build our salvation upon straw and stubble.

Think of this, and of the constant practice of Rome, to seek to destroy those, that will not be of her mind and religion; then guess, who is the Gog and Magog in the text, that takes up persecution and fighting against those, that will not be deceived by Satan, as they themselves are. The design of this day, engageth us to hate Popery, that must be maintained and propagated with blood and force. I shall not dispute, which is the true religion, the Protestant or the Popish. Only set Jacob and Esau before you: whether of the two is more lovely? Popery is rough and rugged; witness the Inquisition, the massacre, the Marian days, and the fifth of November. Think of these, and hate Popery.

Let me enlarge myself a little upon this subject,—what a great cheat Satan puts on men, when he deceives them to become enemies to true religion.—There was hardly ever any persecutor of the truth in the world, but he would confess this truth; so that I might need no other proof of it, but the confession of such enemies. Paul, when he murdered the members of Christ, without mercy or measure, he would be ready enough to say, “Oh! it is a cursed cheat, the devil puts upon men, when he sets them to be enemies to persecute the true religion: but this sect of Nazarenes, that I



persecute, they are heretics, apostates; and it is a good deed to persecute them; for they are fallen from the religion of their fathers."

Bonner, that butcher of hell, that so bloodily murdered so many of the saints of God, in Queen Mary's time, he would be ready enough to say, "Oh! it is a cursed cheat of the devil, to set men upon persecuting true religion: but these Lollards, these Protestants, are desperate heretics, horrid apostates, that have fallen away from holy mother-church of Rome; and it is fit such men should not live." And none that hates and persecutes another for religion, but he will be ready to say in the like kind: this being one arrant and very general cheat of Satan, to make all men,—though of the falsest, worst, and most damnable religion, or profession of religion,—to believe theirs is the best.

The greatest dispute in the world is, 'which is the true religion:' and as the apostles, upon Christ's speaking of one betraying him, every one asked, "Is it I?"—so will every religion in the world, upon this question,—Which is the true religion,—answer, "It is I." The Jew saith, his; the Turk, his; the Papist, his; the Protestant, his: one Protestant, his manner of worship and profession is best; another, his; and a third, his. Like the two hostesses before Solomon, about the living and dead child, one saith, 'The dead religion is thine, and the living mine,'—and another, 'Nay, my religion is the living, but thine the dead.'

How is it possible to determine this controversy, about which there hath been so much quarrelling, and so many, many vast volumes written? And if we do not determine which is true religion,—we can make nothing of the doctrine before us, which speaks of Satan's cheating men to be enemies to it. It would speak high to undertake to determine, when dispute is betwixt so learned men. But let me give you these two marks of it, which also may help to give some caution against being enemy to it.

I. That is the true religion, and true religiousness, that the devil hates most. That is the king of Israel, that the captains of the Syrians bend themselves most to fight against<sup>s</sup>. Need I to tell you, how the devil, in the Revelation, is continually fighting against the true saints of God and their religion? It hath been his quarrel ever



since God set the enmity between the woman's seed and him<sup>h</sup>.

Now, certainly, it may be a very pregnant mark of discerning, what a man's religion and religiousness is, by computing, whether the devil have reason to hate it or no. In the great question betwixt Papists and us, whether is the true religion? bring them to the touchstone. Hath the devil any cause to hate worshipping of images,—to hate the casting away the Scripture, and taking up the wretched traditions of men,—to hate their nursing of the people in ignorance, and the blind leading the blind into the ditch,—to hate the pope's pride and arrogance against God, and Christ, and kings, and princes,—the clergy's domineering over the consciences of men, to keep them blind, and so as they may make a prey of them? In a word, hath the devil any reason to hate that religion, that is nothing but paint, and show, and outside, and no life of religion at all in it? These things make for him, and are on his side, and bring him souls to hell, heaps upon heaps; and he hath no reason to be an enemy to these. Hath the devil reason to hate or hinder the religion and devotion of him, that is huge devout in the church, in all ceremonial and formal appearance, and they would take him for a saint or an angel; but, out of the church, he is loose, covetous, malicious, cruel, profane, and no better than a devil? Such men's religion will never do the devil any disadvantage, or be any diminishment to his kingdom.

But that religion, that gives God his due in holy and spiritual worship, in holy and spiritual walking; that devotion, that serves God in spirit and truth; that ministry, that, in care, and constancy, and conscientiousness, is always striving to bring souls to God, and to bring them beyond the form to the power of godliness, and to deliver them from the power of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son;—let any man of reason and understanding guess, whether Satan do not, cannot choose but, hate such a religion, devotion, ministry. So that, as Solomon judged, 'This live child is that woman's, because her bowels yearn towards it,'—so may we very well judge that to be the true and best religion and religiousness, that the devil's bowels yearn against, that he cannot but hate and be enemy to.

<sup>h</sup> Gen. iii. 15.



II. That is the best and truest religion and religiousness, that sheweth forth the most power of godliness. There is a form and a power of godliness, and as much difference between them, as between a picture taken to the life, and the live person of whom the picture is taken. A form of godliness is like an apparition of a dead person, that carries the resemblance of him, when he was alive; but it is but an empty, airy, phantasm,—an apparition, no substance: but the power of godliness is that, that is substantial, and hath life in it; a living religion; a fruitful religion; a religion with power: as it is, 2 Tim. i. 7, “God hath given us, not the spirit of fear, but of power.” I cannot but observe that, in 1 Tim. iv. 8,—the distinction betwixt bodily exercise and godliness: “Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable to all things.” By ‘bodily exercise,’ he means strictness or austerity used upon the body upon a religious account;—much fasting, watching, laying hard, faring hard, and even severity upon a man’s self. The Papists will tell you brave stories of such persons, and brag of the stupendous austerity of their saints, hermits, anchorites, cloisterers, how hard they fared, how they watched, how hard they lay, what cold, what heat, they endured; whereas, when all is done, all that may prove a clean distinct thing from godliness, and may prove but little profitable.

I might speak at large, what godliness is, as distinct from this; what the power of godliness is, as distinct from the form; and wherein true religiousness shows forth the power of godliness: but I will give you only the apostle’s brief description of all:—“Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” True religion is that, that brings forth the fruits of charity and purity. The power of godliness is that, that appears in charity and purity, “to visit the fatherless and widows, and to keep unspotted from the world.”

Need I much discourse to show, what a sad cheat Satan puts on them, that he deceives to be enemies to the power of godliness? If time would permit, I might reckon by particulars.

First, Is it not a base cheat of Satan to make men his drudges and deputies, to vent his spleen? In the fable, the

<sup>1</sup> Jam. i. 27.



fox uses the cat's foot to take the apple out of the fire. Satan puts such men's fingers into the fire, to serve his own turn. Sometimes wicked men are instruments in the hand of God to punish the wicked; and God, when he hath done with the rod, throws it into the fire: but to be an instrument in the hand of the devil, to persecute godly men, is a dreadful cheat of the devil, to bring men to it; and if that rod escape fire, you might say, 'There is no God.'

Secondly, It is a base cheat to bring men to account it godliness, to hate godliness, to do God service by doing him disservice; to cheat men even out of their wits, to think it religion, to hate, persecute, and destroy those, that will not be as irreligious, ceremonial, profane, and evil, as themselves. An old trick that began in Cain<sup>j</sup>, and hath been in fashion too much in all time.

Thirdly, To deceive men that profess the gospel, to persecute the gospel, is to cheat men to the very height of iniquity. Some think this carries a great smatch of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Certainly, it will be hard for you to name a greater impiety. Error in religion is sad and lamentable; corruption in manners is sinful and deplorable; but to persecute and hate the power of godliness, breathes the very breath and lungs of the devil.

j 1 John, iii. 12.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

ELY, NOVEMBER 5, 1672.

2 PET. II. 15.

*Who have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.*

THE last days of Jerusalem are characterized in Scripture, in one regard, the best of times,—in another, the worst. The best, in regard of the dealing of God; the worst, in regard of the dealing of men. For,

I. As to the dealing of God. In the last days of that city (for so is that expression to be understood most commonly, when we meet with mention of the ‘last days’), God sent his Son<sup>b</sup>; in the last days of that city, God poured down his Spirit<sup>c</sup>; in the last days of that city, was “the mountain of the Lord’s house exalted above the mountains, and many nations flowed unto it<sup>d</sup> :” and, in a word, in the last days of that city, were accomplished all the great things, that God promised concerning Christ, the coming of the gospel, and calling of the Gentiles :—the happiest times, that ever came in regard of God’s actings.

II. But in regard of the actings of men, the most unhappy and wretched. For in those last days were “perilous times<sup>e</sup> :” in those last times there were those, that “departed from the faith<sup>f</sup> ;” in those last times, were “mockers<sup>g</sup> ;” and, in a word, in those last times, were “many antichrists,” “by which (saith the apostle<sup>h</sup>) we know that they are the last times.”

And hence the generation of those times are pictured so black and ugly all along the New Testament; “An evil and

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1179.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. i. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Acts, ii. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. ii. 2.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 1.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 3.

<sup>h</sup> 1 John, ii. 18.



adulterous generation<sup>i</sup>;" an untoward generation<sup>j</sup>: "a generation of vipers<sup>k</sup>;" and, in a word, a generation that no man can speak out their wickedness: for so the prophet<sup>l</sup> means, "Who shall declare his generation?" meaning, 'the wickedness of the generation,' wherein Christ lived.

The men, the apostle speaks of in the words of the text, are the worst of that generation, as that generation was the worst of all before it: that the very dregs of time; and these the very dregs of those dregs. Insomuch that, if you would give forth a lot to find out the wickedest generation of men, and the wickedest men of the generation, that had been from the beginning of the world till those times,—that generation and those men would be taken. How these men are pictured at large in their proper ugly colours and complexion in those places in the Epistles to Timothy, in the Epistle of Jude, and this chapter all along, you may read at leisure. What their character is in the words that are before us, gives a fair conjecture, what they are in their full description; and the words speak them bad and bad again, though they say no more of them. "They have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray," &c. They are gone out of the right way, and have betaken them to the wrong, and have chosen even the worst of wrong ways, "the way of Balaam."

Of him, and of his actings, you have the story in Num. xx, and forwards: and the apostle gives a very fair epitome of it here in a very few words, when he saith, "He loved the wages of iniquity." We will first consider of him, a little, and his copy, after which these men write; and then we will consider of their writing after it.

I. You have him here described by his parentage, and by his qualities.—By his parentage; "he is Balaam the son of Bosor:"—by his qualities; "he loved the wages of unrighteousness." That you may read of him in his story in Moses, though not in such terms, yet in equivalent; but his father's name to be Bosor, that you find not there; but all along he is called there, and wheresoever named in the Old Testament, 'Balaam, the son of Beor.' Those that are apt to tax the originals of Scripture of corruption and interpolation, may chance think it is so here; and that some carelessness or unhappy dash of the pen made it Bosor here,

<sup>i</sup> Matt. xii. 39.<sup>j</sup> Acts, ii. 40.<sup>k</sup> Matt. xxiii. 33.<sup>l</sup> Isa. liii. 8.



when it should have been *Beor*. I remember the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter of Jeremiah, that it is written in the Chaldee tongue, and so is no other passage in all his prophecy, “Thus shall ye say to them, The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.” These words came not into the Chaldee tongue by chance, or any inadvertency, but by sacred wisdom, to put so much of the Chaldee language into the mouths of the Jews against the time, when they should be captivated into Chaldea in Babylon,—that, if they could speak no more of that language, yet they might have thus much of it, as to be able to answer the Chaldeans, if they should be bragging of their gods, or entice them to worship them, “That the gods, that made not the heavens and the earth, should perish from the earth,” &c.

The change of the name *Beor* into *Bosor* relishes of the Chaldee language too, as they that are versed in that language, may very well observe, *ain* being ordinarily changed into *sin*, and *sin* into *ain*. And our apostle doth neither mistake himself in so pronouncing the name, nor hath any transcriber miswritten it after him; but he uttered it according to the Chaldee idiom and propriety; and, by this very word, gives intimation, that he was in Chaldea, when he wrote this Epistle. He dates his former Epistle from Babylon<sup>m</sup>, “The church, which is at Babylon, doth salute you.” And this word, uttered in the Chaldee idiom, doth evidence, that it was Babylon in Chaldea; though some would have it to mean Rome, which, in mystery, is called Babylon.

We might, by the way, upon change of the name, *Beor* into *Bosor*, observe these three things:—

First; That Peter spent his latter days in Chaldea, and that there he died; whereas it is so confidently asserted, but can never be proved, that he died at Rome. For he himself tells, in chap. i. 14, that he was now old, when he wrote this Epistle,—and looked daily, when he should lay down the tabernacle of his body.

Secondly; That no tittle in Scripture is idle, but ought to have its consideration; according to the saying of the Jews, “That there is no tittle in Scripture, but even mountains of matter hang upon it:”—and, as our Saviour saith, “one jot or tittle of the law shall not perish;” so, not one jot

<sup>m</sup> Chap. v. 13.



or tittle in Scripture, but hath its weight. Here is one poor letter, which, one would think, were crept in by some oversight, yet that carries with it matter of important and weighty consideration.

Thirdly; How necessary human learning is for the understanding and explaining of Scripture, which is so much cried down and debased by some. They that cry out against human learning, and take on them, that they can expound the Scripture by the Spirit,—I doubt they would be very hard set to clear this place, and to reconcile Moses and this apostle about the pronounciation of the word *Beor* and *Bosor*.

Well,—however these names differ, yet Balaam is the same both in name and nature, and no changling. He loves ‘the wages of unrighteousness’ to-day, and he loves them to-morrow; and wheresoever he goes, that goes with him, and he is always at the same lock with it.

It is a strange passage in his story, that God should forbid him to go with the first messengers of Balak, and yet suffer him to go with the second; that when he had permitted him to go with these second, he should, by his angel, meet him, and stop him with a drawn sword, and with danger of his life: and that, after that stop, he should permit him to go again, and restrain him no more. God saw his heart, how it hankered to curse Israel, that he might get the wages of iniquity, the money and reward, which Balak had promised. So that one while God permits him to go, that he might try him what he would do; another while he stops him from going, because he saw his heart was set on mischief. At last he shows himself, after his dissimulation all along: and when he had told Balak, that he would speak nothing in favour to him, but only what the Lord should command him; and had told his servants, that “though Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold,” he would not step one word aside from what the Lord should dictate to him: yet his heart run after his covetousness all this while; and the silver, and gold, and honours, that Balak promised, run in his mind, and his mind upon them; he cannot but hanker after those “wages of unrighteousness.”

Therefore, whereas God did so overpower and overrule him, that he could not curse Israel, as, with his heart, he would have done, before he would have lost that money,—he finds a trick to make them make themselves accursed, by



counselling Balak to entangle them in whoredom with Midianitish women. Cursed counsel, indeed, it was, and proceeded from a most cursed heart. A wretch, that knew, by such experience as he did, that God would not have the people cursed; yet he, rather than lose his money, will make them to make themselves curses. A wretch, that prefers his bag of money, before the welfare of a whole nation; that cares not how many of them perish, both soul and body, rather than he should fail of his prize.

This is Balaam, this is 'the way of Balaam,' thus to love, thus to purchase, the wages of unrighteousness. For I need not to show, why they are called 'the wages of unrighteousness,' when they are thus gotten.

II. This is the copy, that they follow in the text, and write so fair after, if the following of such a foul copy may be said to be writ fair. And who they were, the first clause in the text doth give some notice of: that they had been in the right way, and had forsaken it: and so had Balaam been so far in the right way, while he blessed Israel, if he could have kept him there; but he forsook that way, and betook to the way to make them cursed. These most abominable ones, in that most abominable generation, we have been speaking of, and the text speaks of, were such as had been once in the right way, in the profession of the gospel, but now were utterly revolted from it, and become most contrary to it. And so our Saviour shows the very topping-up of the wickedness of that generation, in that parable of the devil cast out by the gospel, but come in again with seven evil spirits worse than himself: "So (saith he) shall it be with this generation<sup>n</sup>." Of such the apostle speaks, 1 Tim. iv. 1: some, that should "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." And he saith, that such a falling away would discover "the man of sin, and child of perdition<sup>o</sup>:" and the apostle<sup>p</sup> saith, that "many antichrists were abroad, come out from them," that professed the gospel, but now were become antichrists. And this our apostle, in this chapter, ver. 2, intimates, that they "had once known the way of righteousness; but were turned from the holy commandment, that was delivered to them."

And being thus turned out of the way, and fallen from the truth, they were fallen into all manner of abomination.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. xii. 45.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 3.

<sup>p</sup> 1 John, ii. 18.



Read but this chapter and the Epistle of Jude, at your leisure: and you will see the full character of them. In little, take this account of them:—

1. That, like Balaam, for love of filthy lucre, they made merchandise of souls, and cared not what became of them, that they might get gain. And, accordingly,

2. That they led them into all looseness and libertinism; to commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols; to riot in the day-time, and, indeed, to account any thing lawful. I might produce Scriptures for all these; but I suppose, you remember them.

3. They were direct enemies to the power and purity of the gospel, and bitter persecutors of the sincere professors of it. The apostle gives evidence enough of this in those few words<sup>a</sup>, “As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth.” I shall spare more picturing of them: read but the places I have cited, and you will see them in very sad colours.

And now, let us look upon them, as very justly we may, as a very sad spectacle; such another as the spectacle of the fallen angels; once angels, but now devils: these, once Christians, but now brute beasts, atheists, devils incarnate. In the cursed copy and example before us, Balaam, and these his disciples or followers,—we may see the fruits of two as cursed trees, as any grows by the lake of Sodom: “Covetousness in Balaam,” and “Covetousness and apostasy,” or revolting from the truth, in these, that came after him.

Covetousness, that makes him to sell a whole nation to God’s curse and plague, and their own ruin, for ‘the wages of unrighteousness.’ He hath got a bag of money; and twenty-four thousand men of Israel are destroyed for it, and the anger of the Lord brought upon the whole camp. And what cares Balaam for all this, so long as he hath got the money? Oh! the cursed fruits of covetousness, that might be reckoned heaps upon heaps; I shall but mention one, and that may be enough. Covetousness made Judas sell the very Son of God for money:—a monster of villany, that the very devils themselves might stand amazed at, but that he played their own game.

And as for apostasy, or revolting from the truth, how horrid fruits and effects have followed, and do follow, upon it,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 8.



Scripture and history give such evidence and instance, that to speak of them, would take up more time, than even this whole day would afford us. We shall only speak of one particular, wherein all apostasy, and all the fruits of apostasy, are met and convened; and that is, that, which this day gives us occasion to commemorate and remember,—viz. the church of Rome. When you read of those, that “have forsaken the right way, and gone astray,” remember Rome; for who is there, that hath done so more? And when you read of “following the way of Balaam, and loving the wages of unrighteousness,” remember that church and city; for who hath done the one, and who doth the other, more than she? She cavils at us, as if we had forsaken the right way, when we forsook her; but we most truly answer, that we forsook her, because she hath forsaken the right way.

The church at Rome was once in the right way indeed, and celebrated for it, through the whole world, as the apostle tells us, Rom. i. 8. But how long did it continue in that way? I may very well answer, As long as it was built upon the rock Christ: but when it began to build itself upon Peter, then and thenceforward did it forsake the right way. For, certainly, he forsakes the right way, that leaves to build upon the sure foundation, Christ,—and builds upon the sand, the person of a mere man.

If I were to render an account of my belief, concerning the first founders of a church at Rome, I should have recourse to that passage, Acts ii. 10, that there were at Jerusalem, at the feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was poured upon the apostles, “Strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes.” Did not some of these believe, and, returning to Rome, carry the gospel thither with them? If any doubt it, I shall name two of them, that did, Rom. xvi. 7. The apostle, from Corinth, saluting the church that was then at Rome, among others, names there, “Salute Andronicus and Junius my kinsmen, and fellow-prisoners, who are renowned among the apostles, and who were in Christ before me.” Here are two men, that were very highly respected among the apostles, and that before Paul was an apostle;—and where, and when, could this possibly be, but at that time at Jerusalem, these being of those that are mentioned in those words, “There were then at Jerusalem, strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes?”—By these men and some



other, that we cannot name, a Romanist must give me leave to believe, that the gospel was first planted in Rome, and a church first founded there.

And I must believe, that the church, by them planted there, was watered by Paul, and that before ever he came to Rome. That ye may think a solecism, to say ‘that he watered the church of Rome, before ever he came at it;’—but the church came to him. For if you observe that, Acts xviii. 2, that Claudius had expelled all the Jews out of Rome: and that the apostle met with Priscilla and Aquila, and divers others of that church, mentioned Rom. xvi;—you must conclude, that, when they returned to Rome again, after the death of Claudius,—as it is plain they did,—they returned fully furnished with the doctrines and instructions of that blessed apostle: and so there is a church there then pure and holy, and in the right way, and renowned, as the apostle tells us, through the world: but how long it so continued, is not easily determined; but that it did not always so continue, is as easily proved. The apostle gives us cause to suspect, that some corruptions were crept in there even in his own time, when, in his Epistle to them<sup>q</sup>, he speaks of ‘divisions and scandals,’ as it seems, among them, ‘contrary to the doctrine they had learned.’ And in his Epistle to the Philippians, written from Rome, he intimates, that some preached the gospel, as it seems, there, not purely, but ‘of strife and contention<sup>r</sup>.’

However, though we cannot punctually determine the time and degrees, by which the church of Rome did degenerate; yet, that it is degenerate from the purity of that first church there, and from the purity of the gospel primitively professed there, is written so plainly, that the dimmest eye may read it, if a man will not shut or put it out. “How is the faithful city become a harlot! righteousness once lodged there, but now murderers,” is the sad question and complaint of the prophet Isaiah concerning Jerusalem, in his first chapter. How, and by what degrees, it came to be a harlot, and to what a high degree of harlotry it was come, the former was not easy to determine, and the latter not easy to express; yet that it was so, was but too plain. And the very like may be said in this case, and of this city. The city, once faithful, is become a harlot: but how, and by what

<sup>q</sup> Rom. xvi. 17.

<sup>r</sup> Phil. i. 14, 15.



degrees, and to what a degree, let her look to that, at her peril. It is not so very material to determine of the time and degrees of her degeneration, as to consider how grossly she is degenerate. If we should go about to particularize in every thing concerning faith and manners, wherein that church hath forsaken the right way, and is gone astray,—we had need to take up the longest day in summer to speak out that matter, rather than to confine ourselves to a piece of an hour; and it would require our examining even their whole doctrine and practice. We will touch but two, instead of two hundred.

First, The apostle, chap. i. 8, saith, ‘the faith of the primitive church at Rome, was renownedly spoken of through the world.’ Now, do you think it was such an implicit faith, as the church of Rome teacheth now,—That it sufficeth, if a man believe as the church believes, though he know not what either the church or himself believeth? Do we think, that the first founders of the church in that city,—be it Peter, as they will have it, or Paul, as he had some concurrence to it, or those that I have mentioned,—do we think, I say, that they ever broached such a doctrine there, “It is enough if you believe with an implicit faith, or as the church believes?” The right way of believing in Christ, the apostle laid down most divinely, in such expressions as these, “Let every one be assured in his own mind.”—“I know whom I have believed.”—“Have faith in God; and if thou hast faith, have it to thyself,” &c.—importing, a knowledge and certainty of what is believed, and not that faith should grope in the dark, and believe it cannot tell what, but only as others believe.

The right way that the primitive church of Rome was in, was the way of knowledge and understanding, that they knew and understood the things of salvation, and were acquainted with the things of God, and the way of eternal life. Can he that reads the divine Epistle to the Romans, think otherwise? Or, that hears the apostle’s commendation of them, think otherwise?

Now, hath not that church forsaken the right way that teacheth, ‘That ignorance is the mother of devotion,’ and practiseth accordingly to keep the people in ignorance? Was Paul of that mind, think you, when he writ his Epistle to the Romans? He might have very well saved that labour of instituting them in those many high and excellent points, that



he doth in that Epistle, if he had been of the mind the now-church of Rome is, that the way to build people up in devotion, is to keep them in ignorance. His counsel is, "Be not children in understanding;" but theirs, "By all means to make them children in understanding." And when, as our Saviour tells, that "blind guides lead blind people into the ditch,"—these teach, that "blindness is that, that will lead to heaven." Have not these forsaken the right way to heaven, that choose the ways of darkness to lead thither?

Secondly, Certainly, that church hath forsaken the right way, that goes clean contrary to the right way. If the right way is to 'search the Scriptures,' as John v. 39, then they have forsaken the right way; for their way is to keep men from searching them. If the right way is to use a known tongue in public worship, as 1 Cor. xiv,—their way is to use a tongue not understood. If the right way is to administer the cup in the sacrament; their way is to forbid its administration. If the right way is, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve:" certainly, they have forsaken the right way, that worship angels and saints departed, that worship crucifixes and images, that worship and adore a piece of bread.

Thirdly, In a word (for it were endless to reckon all their aberrations), is there any wrong way in the world, if blowing-up of parliaments be not out of the right one? If this be the right way, then Pharaoh was in the right way, when he plotted the drowning of the infants of Israel: Jezebel was in the right way, when she murdered the prophets of the Lord: and Nebuchadnezzar was in the right way, when he threw the three young nobles of Judah into the fiery furnace. Either this is not the right way, or the best of the saints of God were in the wrong; for they ever walked in a way clean contrary to this kind of dealing. They were, many of them, slain for the truth; you shall never find so much as one of them, that slew any for the truth. Do you think that Peter, the founder of their church, as they pretend, would ever have consented with them, had he been alive, to the blowing-up of a parliament? And do they find any direction or encouragement to such a thing in any of his writings? Though he was once so fiery as to draw his sword, and cut off the high-priest's servant's ear; yet I believe, he would never have been persuaded to have been a Faux, a Garnet, or a Catesby, in such a design as this. His Master had cooled his courage,



for swording it again, with that cooler, "He that smiteth with the sword, shall perish with the sword." And these men might have learned that lesson, if they had been either his or Christ's disciples.

When the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, misconstruing the meaning of their name, 'Boanerges,'—would have fired a village of the Samaritans, our Saviour checks them with, "You know not what spirit you are of." His meaning was,—that they understood not, what spirit the disciples of Christ should be of: not so fiery, but meek, charitable, and forgiving. Did these men, think you, ever consult Christ and his oracle, when they went about to fire parliament, and state, and kingdom? Would Christ, think you, ever have given such counsel? and would he have owned such a spirit, for the spirit of a true Christian? Certainly, they are gone astray from his right way, that breathe nothing but fire and sword, and blood and slaughter.

I have heard it, more than once and again, from the sheriffs that took all the powder-traitors, and brought them up to London,—that, every night, when they came to their lodging by the way, they had their music and dancing a good part of the night. One would think it strange, that men in their case should be so merry. And was it, think you, because God had prevented their shedding so much innocent blood, as David once rejoiced for such a prevention, by the counsel of Abigail? No, it was because they were to suffer for such an undertaking, accounting they should die as martyrs in such a cause.

Let them dance and make themselves merry with such a fancy; I am sure, we have cause to rejoice, and to leap for joy, because their design was prevented. For where had England been, had their design taken effect? It may make us even to tremble to think, where England had been, had their design taken effect. Blessed be the God of our mercies, that hath given us cause only to think of it, and that we did not feel it: that only showed us the pit, and did not shut us up in it. The great memorandum to Israel was, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." To England it may be, "I am the Lord thy God, which kept thee out of Egypt, and from the house of spiritual bondage." And our keeping from falling into that servitude, was little less, if not as much as their delivery out of it.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

ELY, NOVEMBER 5, 1673.

2 TIM. III. 8.

*As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses ; so do these,  
also, resist the truth.*

IF any one be of that curiosity, as to desire to see the picture of incarnate devils, let him look here ; for the apostle is charactering such from the beginning of the chapter hitherto :—a generation of men as black as hell, and of that lineage and kindred :—an ungodly breed of wights, that, like the devil himself, sinned as deeply as they could against God ; as irrecoverably as they could against themselves, and as destructively as they could to others. That, whereas the Lycaonians said concerning Paul and Barnabas, “The gods were come down to them in the likeness of men ;” Paul and Barnabas might very well say, concerning these, ‘That fiends were come up among men, in the same likeness of men.’

“From such turn away,” is the apostle’s counsel, at the fifth verse of this chapter ; which words compare but with those words of another apostle, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” and guess what kind of creatures these were. A man may make the devil flee from him ; but there is no putting of these to flight ; but you must flee from them :—impudent, untractable ones, that will by no means be moulded to religion, reason, or humanity ; that will never be convinced, answered, satisfied, that there is no way to deal with them, but not to deal with them ; no way to deal with them, but to flee from them. Their manners the apostle begins to describe ; as, ver. 2, “That they were lovers of themselves ; lovers of money, proud, boasters, blasphemers, disobedient,” &c ; so he goes on to the fifth verse ;—there

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1185.



he describes their religion, that “ they had a form of godliness,” as a devil in shape of an angel of light; but that “ they denied the power of it,”—resisted the truth of it, and that not in an ordinary manner and degree, but “ as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses.”

So that, in the words, you have mention of a cursed copy, and a cursed company that wrote after it: the copy, ‘ Jannes and Jambres withstanding Moses;’ and the cursed company that wrote after it, ‘ those also resist the truth.’ The former, obscure, who they were; and the latter, obscurer.

I. Of Jannes and Jambres you have no more mention, by name, in all the Scripture. For Moses himself nameth no such men, though the apostle says, ‘ they were the men that did resist him.’ And the apostle gives no other signification of them, but only that “ they resisted Moses.” Who, then, were they? And whence had the apostle their names? From the common-received opinion and agreement of the Jewish nation, that currently asserted, that the magicians of Egypt were called by these names. So their own authors tell us in their Babylonian Talmud, in the treatise Menachoth: Aruch a Talmudical Lexicon, in the word יִדְּנִי; and the Chaldee paraphrase of Jonathan, upon Exod. i; to omit more. So that the apostle takes up these two names, neither by revelation, as certainly asserting that the sorcerers of Egypt were of these names; but, as he found the names commonly received by the Jewish nation, so he useth them.

Such a passage is that of the apostle Jude, about ‘ Michael contending with the devil about the body of Moses;’ which he neither speaketh by inspiration, nor by way of certain assertion,—but only citing a common opinion and conceit of the nation, he takes an argument from their own authors and concessions. The observation of such a thing as this is useful, upon general places of the New Testament, which is more worth discoursing upon, if it suited with the time and place.

Thus have we intelligence who Jannes and Jambres were;—the sorcerers or magicians of Egypt, that withstood Moses, helped to harden Pharaoh, deceived the people with lying wonders, affronted the real miracles of God, and opposed the deliverance of Israel. Wretches, that, one would think, they should never find their matches; and yet the apostle



hath found mates for them. For, where was there ever copy of villany set, but some or other was found, that hath written after it? Even the crucifying of the Lord of glory, when it cannot be done literally, because he is not here again to be crucified,—yet, there are but too many, that, in our sense, ‘crucify the Lord of glory<sup>b</sup> :’ and, if he had been again upon earth, do you not think he would have been crucified again before this?

II. Who these are, whom the apostle compares with Jannes and Jambres, is harder to find, than to find who Jannes and Jambres were. For the mark, whereby the apostle would discover them, seems rather to cloud than to clear their discovery,—viz. the circumstance of the time wherein they lived, which he calls the ‘last days :’ ver. 1, “This know, that, in the last days, shall perilous times come.” So, 2 Pet. iii. 3, “In the last days, shall come mockers, walking after their own lusts :” the very same men, that our apostle speaks of here. But which are these ‘last days?’ A threefold conception is taken up concerning the thing :—

1. That, by ‘the last days,’ is meant, ‘all the time of the gospel, from its first coming into the world, to the world’s end.’ But that is too wide a compass, to be a mark of such an occurrence, as the apostle speaks of here.

2. By ‘the last days,’ some understand ‘the last days of the world ;’ and so will apply the things and men spoken of here, to these times, wherein we live, and hereabout, and so to the world’s end. But this construction will hardly agree to what the apostle aimeth at here, when he bids Timothy “turn away from such men ;” nor agree with other places of Scripture, that speak of the same men. Therefore,

3. The proper meaning of the expression, in the common use of the phrase in Scripture, is, ‘The last days of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish state,’ when both of them drew near their end and desolation. And, for confirming of this, among numerous evidences that I might produce, I shall give you but two places of Scripture, and the reason of the expression. Acts ii. 17, the apostle Peter, citing those words of the prophet Joel, “It shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,” &c ; he plainly and positively asserteth, that ‘the prophecy was fulfilled at that time, when now it was but forty years to their destruc-

<sup>b</sup> Heb. vi. 6.



tion.—The apostle John (1 Epistle, chap. ii. 18) plainly tells, “Little children, It is the last time; and, as you have heard that antichrist cometh, so there are now many antichrists, whereby we know, that it is the last time.” And the reason of the expression is,—because the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish state, is characterized in Scripture as the destruction of the whole world, which might be evidenced by abundance of instances. Therefore, the ‘last days’ of that city and state, are named as the last days of that world.

Now, who these were, of whom, in those last days of Jerusalem, the apostle speaketh, may be some question,—viz. whether unbelieving Jews,—or some that had professed the gospel, but had revolted from it, and had corrupted it by their false doctrine and evil lives.

I doubt not he means the latter; which might be cleared out of several other places in Scripture, and even out of this place also, when the apostle saith, they had “a form of godliness,” and that, concerning the faith or doctrine of the gospel, they were “reprobate.” “The mystery of iniquity,” he calls it, 2 Thess. ii; i. e. iniquity under a mask or visor of religion,—for the opposition of the unbelieving Jew against the gospel, was barefaced iniquity; iniquity above-board, and that had no mask or mystery in it; but these, under the mask of the profession of the gospel, opposed the purity, and resisted the truth, of it. And of such apostates, the Epistles of all the apostles are full of complainings, as instances might be produced, which would take up the whole time now allotted. I shall allege but these two places:—Acts xx. 29, 30, “For I know this, that, after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves, shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” And 1 John ii. 19, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for, if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.” And to the same tenor tends that parable, Matt. xii. ad fin.

So that you have here the wickedest men of the wickedest generation that ever was upon the earth. For so was that generation, wherein they lived, and they the very dregs of that generation: that generation resisting Christ and the



gospel with open face ; these under a mask of religion and the gospel : that generation proclaimed open enmity against the truth ; these practising it under pretence of friendship. Those came against Christ with swords and staves ; these saluted Christ with a ‘ Hail, master ! ’ but betrayed him : they pretended to the gospel, as Herod pretended to worship Christ, when he was new-born, but intended to murder him. And herein they outvied Jannes and Jambres, their sampler,—as commonly, in writing after a wicked copy, the transcript exceeds the original. For Jannes and Jambres had never owned the truth, as they had done ; for these had owned it, but now resist it.

I need not, I suppose, either to trouble myself or you, by insisting to prove, that the apostle, by the ‘ truth,’ here does mean the ‘ gospel.’ And do I need to clear, why the gospel is called by that title of the ‘ truth ? ’ If any desire that, let me briefly propose these things to him.

I. First, Look upon the heathen’s theology and religion, and that was but a mere lie. Those poor wretches “ fed on ashes, and a deceived heart turned them aside, that they could not say, There is a lie in my right hand<sup>c</sup> : ” though there was nothing but a lie there. The devil foisting the greatest lie upon the world, that all the anvils of hell could forge,—viz. to persuade men to worship devils for God ; “ The thing which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God<sup>d</sup>. ” That I may well remember to you that passage about the mad emperor Caligula, that would needs be a god, and, for that purpose, had dressed himself in all accoutrements possible to make him seem such a one,—a sober man that saw all, being asked what he thought of him, “ Why (saith he), I think he is ‘ magnum delirium,’ ‘ a great piece of foolery.’ ”

Stand, and look on the divinity of the heathen, as it is characterized by the poets ; and all is but a great fable. Mark the religion of the heathen, as it was prescribed by their augurs, pontiffs, philosophers ; and it is nothing but a great lie. That the gospel was to uncharm those delusions, to release those poor creatures from those cheats and impostures, is most deservedly called ‘ the truth.’

II. Look upon the religion of the Jews : that was all but types and shadows : Moses’s face veiled,—Israel in the cloud,

<sup>c</sup> Isa. xliv. 20.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. x. 20.



—all divinity and religion under mysteries and figures. The tabernacle was filled with a cloud, as soon as it was set<sup>e</sup>, and all the ordinances given out of it, cloudy and shadows. Hereupon the gospel is called ‘the truth,’ because it unrid-dled those mysterious hieroglyphics, unveiled the face of Moses, and showed the substance and body, which those veils and shadows did enfold. Thereupon it is, that the evangelist makes that most pertinent opposition<sup>f</sup>, “The law was given by Moses.” The moral law was given by Moses, the ministration of condemnation, as the apostle calls it<sup>g</sup>, “but grace came by Jesus Christ” against condemnation. The ceremonial law was given by Moses, a ministration of types and shadows; but “truth came by Jesus Christ,” substantiating and resolving all.

III. Look into the gospel itself; it is the greatest and most divine truth, that can be given. And as the devil, when he brought in the heathen religion, brought in the greatest lie, that could be imposed upon men:—so, when God brought in the gospel, he brought in the greatest truth, that could be received by men: and should I exceed my bounds, if I said, ‘the greatest truth, that could be revealed by God?’ For what could God reveal to mortal men more, than he hath done in it,—himself,—his Son,—his Spirit,—his grace,—his salvation? More than what is revealed in the gospel, shall never be revealed to men on this side heaven. And is not heaven itself revealed very plainly in it? And yet there are men in the text, and men in the world, that make it their work to resist this truth. This ‘light to lighten Gentiles’ they would put out: this ‘glory of the people Israel’ they would corrupt; and this great and divine oracle of God they would silence, and stop its mouth. Very fitly resembled in the emblem, where the candle, being lighted and set up, the devil, the Turk, the pope, and a company of heretics and persecutors, set, with all their earnestness and endeavour, to blow it out.

More than an emblem of such an endeavour, was the great plot and design of this day, from the stroke of which, we are here met to render our acknowledgment and thanksgiving: an endeavour to have blown up and blown out the truth of God, and the purity and power of the gospel, out of this nation for ever.

<sup>e</sup> Exod. xl. ad finem.

<sup>f</sup> John, i. 17.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Cor. iii.



In the words before us, you plainly see two things, an act and the agents,—resisting of the truth, and the men that resisted it. But do you not also observe one out of sight, or behind the veil,—viz. the providence of God looking on, and permitting such a thing to be done? A mystery of iniquity in the cursed acting of the persons,—and a mystery of providence and dispensing, in suffering them so to act.

I. Concerning the persons and their acting. The truth might take up the complaint and expostulation of David, “It was not an open enemy that did me this evil, for then I should have borne it; neither was it an open adversary, that magnified himself against me, for then, peradventure, I might have hid myself from him; but it was thou, my companion and familiar, which took counsel with me together, and we walked to the house of God, as friends. He that eateth at my table, hath lifted up his heel against me.”

These men, and the truth or gospel, had been old acquaintance; they had conversed and been familiar together; they had taken counsel together, and gone to church too, as friends: but now they become her enemies, because she is truth. They had approved the gospel, been initiated into it, professed it, and, it may be, some of them had preached it; but now they become its enemy, because she is truth. They had once received the knowledge of the truth, but now they “wilfully sin against it<sup>h</sup> :” they had once ‘known the way of righteousness,’ but now were utterly turned away from it<sup>i</sup> : they had once run well<sup>k</sup>, but now they run clear counter to what they had done: and seek to destroy the gospel, which they had once professed; and resist the truth with as much, nay, more, fervency and earnestness, than ever they owned it.

It was Paul’s honour and comfort, that “he now preached the gospel, which he once destroyed<sup>l</sup> ;” but it was these wretches’ dread and condemnation, that they destroyed the gospel, which they once preached.

That general apostasy, or revolting from truth, that was then in the church, brought forth twins of a clear contrary complexion, as different as Jacob and Esau,—if I may use Jacob’s name with such persons, when both of them are of the manners and conditions of Esau, and you could hardly tell which of them was the worse. For some apostatized to

<sup>h</sup> Heb. x. 26.<sup>i</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 21.<sup>k</sup> As Gal. iii.<sup>l</sup> Gal. i. 23.



pure Judaism; some, to mere, or worse than, heathenism; some, to dote upon the rites of Moses, and to look to be justified by the works of the law, and to betake themselves to a Pharisaical austerity, hoping thereby to be justified: others revolted to all looseness of life and atheism, abusing the liberty of the gospel to libertinism, and “turning the grace of God into wantonness;” and accounting all things lawful, that might content the flesh and please a carnal mind.

Now, that the apostles give intimation of both these, and sadly complain and inveigh against them, I need not to particularize; he that runs, may read it,—more especially in the Epistle to the Galatians concerning the former,—and in 2 Pet. ii, and Jude, concerning the latter.

I might speak, how these wretches did resist the gospel, or what instruments or machinations they used for the opposing of it. As,

1. Venting damnable heresies and doctrines of devils, as our two apostles tell us, 1 Tim. iii. 1; 2 Pet. ii.

2. Using the trade of Jannes and Jambres, conjuration, and sorcery, and lying miracles, as our Lord had foretold<sup>m</sup>, “That they should show signs and wonders to deceive the very elect, if it were possible.” And the apostle<sup>n</sup> tells, it was so as our Saviour had foretold, “That the coming of this mystery of iniquity, was according to the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and lying wonders.”

3. They used the trade, that the Roman emperors afterward used, of bitter, sharp, and cruel, persecution. Of which you have several memorials in the Epistles: ravening wolves breaking into the church in sheeps’ clothing, and making sad havoc of the flock all before them. This was “the judgment that began at the house of God<sup>o</sup>;”—“The hour of temptation, that came upon all the earth<sup>p</sup>.”

I might, by the way, observe, how far a man may fall from the true profession of the gospel,—viz. so far as to become the worst of men, and the gospel’s most bitter enemy: and that the bitterest enemies of the gospel have ever been some, that have pretended to the gospel. Persecution never did in the church that mischief, that heresy hath done: and the sorest wounds that the gospel ever received, were like his in Zechariah, “in the house of her friends:” but this I shall not insist on.

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxiv. 24.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 9.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 17.

<sup>p</sup> Rev. iii. 10.



You see Jannes and Jambres have here met with their match: but is there any match to be found for these men, that have matched them?—Yes; look at Rome, and you find them there. As many Protestants and Papists, by the ‘last days,’ do, indeed, understand the last days of the world,—so many Protestant divines do attribute all the characters of those wretched men to the Papacy. And, indeed, they are so like, that it is no wonder, if they be not clearly discerned asunder. Though the Papacy would be taken for a Jacob, yet she must give leave to standers-by to take her for Esau, when her hands, and neck, and other parts, be as rough as his.

Set her and this mystery of iniquity, we have been speaking of, together; and can you know them asunder? Though I am not persuaded, the apostle speaks of Rome, in 2 Thess. ii, but of these first apostate Christians,—yet comes not Rome an inch behind what is characterized there.

I. Both of them apostatized from the truth,—she, as well as those in the text before us. It is very true, Rome had once been a famous church, whose faith was renowned through the whole world, as the apostle intimates, once and again, in his Epistle thither. But, as the historian, ‘Quæres Samnium,’ ‘You may seek for Samnium, where Samnium was,’ and not find it,—so may you seek for such a church there, where once such a church was, and be far enough from finding it. ‘Corruptio optimi,’ ‘The corruption of that best’ church that then was, is become the worst corruption. And if you would find either truth or a right church there, you do but look for the living among the dead. They brag of their incorruption, and that their doctrine and worship hath descended pure all along, and that that church hath not been tainted from its first foundation by Peter and Paul. So the Jews of old cried, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,” when they had made it a den of thieves.

You can hardly persuade me, but some taint was got into that church,—in the time of Peter, I do not say, for I am assured he never was there,—but even before Paul came there, and while he was there: and sure he must be of a large faith, that can believe she hath kept pure so many hundred years together, above a thousand. When I read that, Rom. xvi. 17, “I beseech you, brethren, mark those that cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine



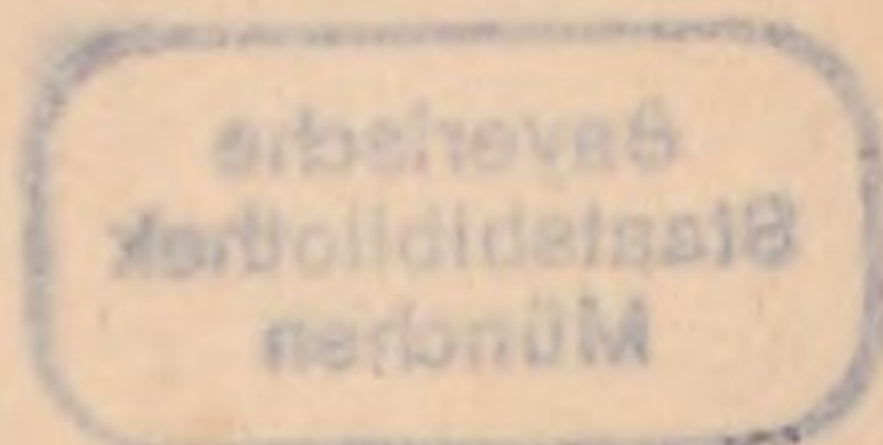
ye have learned, and avoid them: for they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly,"—I cannot but strongly suspect, that there were some such wretched ones, as these we have been speaking of, then tampering in the church of Rome,—and it was well, if she received no taint from them; hardly any church in the world, but did. And when I read that, Phil. i. 16, "Some preach Christ of envy and contention, not purely, thinking to add affliction to my bonds;"—I cannot but suspect, that that was in Rome itself, where the apostle then lay prisoner: and that then the quarrel, "I am of Paul, I am of Cephas, or Peter," was set a-foot in the church of Rome, as it was in the church of Corinth.

However, I believe that that star, that fell from heaven, to whom was given the 'key of the bottomless pit,' and he opened the pit, and let out horrid smoke, and so horrid locust (Rev. ix), is most truly understood by our Protestant divines, of the bishop of Rome, or the Papacy. For a 'star,' in the Revelation-language, is a doctor or minister of the church; and 'falling from heaven,' is falling from the truth, and the true church.

II. As the apostasy of the men in the text, and in the apostle's description in this chapter and elsewhere, was into the two contraries, strictness in outward ceremony, and looseness of life and conversation,—he that knows not the like in the Papacy, is little acquainted with their story. As great strictness enjoined in the one, and as great looseness permitted in the other, in that church, as that the Jews themselves were not more strict in the one, nor the heathens themselves more loose in the other. Like Solomon's temple-windows, if it were fit to compare so noble a thing with so base, 'narrow without, and broad within,'—strict in outward formality, loose in inward conversation.

III. As these in the text resist the truth, so, that the Papacy doth, none that is a child or disciple of the truth, but he knows with grief; and can they of the Papacy but know it themselves? How many witnesses of this matter, have been in every corner of the world, especially in those, where the truth or purity of the gospel hath appeared?

Were you to name the greatest contrariety to the truth of the gospel, that you could name, could you name any thing so directly contrary as Popery? the smoke out of the





bottomless pit, that is as contrary to the purity of the light, as what can be most contrary. I should but do, what is done again and again, in large and numerous volumes,—if I should go about to prove and evidence this to you,—viz. that the Papacy is the great resister of the truth and gospel, and the great contrariety to the purity of the gospel. There are two things that speak it out, though all Protestants hold their peace: and those are,—

1. Their corruption of the Scriptures and the fathers: as the messengers for Micaiah would have corrupted him to speak, as the false prophets did,—so do these by the Scriptures and fathers, to make them speak according to their own mind. Their ‘index expurgatorius’ shows, that they are void of all shame in this point, as well as void of all conscience. And crueller than the Gileadites, that slew so many for saying ‘Sibboleth;’ these make those say Sibboleth, whether they will or no, that they may destroy the truth, that they once spoke out.

2. The bitter and bloody persecution, that the church of Rome hath ever used against the true profession of the gospel, is a testimony written in blood, how incomparable a resister of the truth the Papacy is. And had Christ been at Rome any time for those many and many years, he had tasted of their kindness that way. It is compounded of such principles, that the truth and it cannot live together; but it cannot but seek to destroy the truth; the very temper of the devil himself, who not only strives to destroy the gospel, but cannot but do it with all his endeavour. “Aut tu illum, aut ille te;” he must either destroy it, or it will destroy him. What resistance the Papacy practiseth against the truth by persecution, I suppose it needless to speak of unto any, that hath heard of the bloody days of Queen Mary, the massacre in France, and the powder-treason in England, that you need go no farther for instance. And, blessed be the Lord, for that we have these testimonies only to our ears,—and have not seen Popish resistance of the truth, by persecution, with our eyes. The Lord grant, that England never see it!

Thus have we briefly taken some view of the mystery of iniquity hinted in the text, and verse whence it is taken: “Men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, resisting the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses.”



Now, how large a discourse might we take up of the mysterious dispensation of God, in permitting his most sacred truth to be so affronted and resisted; his most dearly beloved truth, thus to be abused and spurned against; his most divine truth, sealed with the blood of his dear Son, thus to be persecuted, afflicted, tormented.

The name of Rome, in Rev. xvii, is ‘Mystery-Babylon:’ and that, indeed, not only because it is Babylon in a mystery,—but that it is a great mystery, that God permits such a Babylon, so cruel, bloody, inhuman a persecutor of his truth; so continual a disturber, and vexation, and firebrand, to the world; such a deceiver, seducer, and destroyer, of souls. We may take up that, Jer. xii. 1, “Righteous art thou, O Lord, if I plead with thee: yet, may we plead with thee concerning thy judgments? Why doth the way of the wicked prosper? and why is it so well with those, that work iniquity?” Why is it so successful, with Popery, heresy, error, and ignorance? That that is aloft and prevaieth, domineers and tyrannizes, while truth is trodden down, and the poor gospel trampled under foot?

I might speak at large, how God permits things to go thus, upon very divine reasons. As,

First, For the trial of his own people, that profess his truth, how they will stick to his truth under opposition; how they will cleave to a poor, persecuted, despised gospel; how they will own a truth, that brings in no money, no worldly profit, nor honour, nor preferment, but loss of all things, to gain eternity. The gospel is the fan of Christ, whereby he purgeth his floor, and separates wheat and chaff asunder.

Secondly, He permits wicked men to resist his truth, that they may make up the measure of their iniquities. They think, they avenge themselves of the truth; whereas, God avengeth himself on them, in giving them up to so reprobate a mind. To refuse the truth, is bad enough; to disobey the truth, this is worse; to deny it, and apostatize from it, this is bad of bads; but resisting and persecuting it, this is worst of all. Some count this the sin against the Holy Ghost. In these men it might be, for they had seen his miracles. But, however, it was ‘a sin unto death’ in them.

Thirdly, God permits this, because he knows, truth at last will conquer. As God turned Christ loose to combat



Satan, and withdrew his divine acting,—because he knew Christ would, at last, come off a conqueror. As it was said<sup>d</sup> of Gad, “Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last;” so it is with truth; it may be opposed, oppressed, trodden under, yet it will overcome at last. Truth is a heavy stone; “Whosoever falls upon it, will be broken; but whomsoever it falls upon, it will grind him to powder.” If truth triumph not in the conversion of men, it will triumph in their condemnation. When there were persecuting emperors, how doth truth triumph over them! And so the time of Rome is coming, when the truth and gospel, which she hath so bitterly resisted and persecuted, shall triumph, and clap their hands at her confusion and ruin; when Babylon shall sink, as a millstone in the midst of the sea, and rise no more. And all those divine truths in the gospel, that she hath opposed, resisted, persecuted,—shall everlastingly rise up in judgment against her, and load her with torments and condemnation.

So let Babylon come in remembrance before the Lord, and he plead the cause of his truth, gospel, people, interest; and reward her, as she hath done to all these, and as she would have done to poor England on the fifth of November. And let all the people say, ‘Amen.’

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xlix. 19.



# A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE,

NOVEMBER 5, 1674.

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ACTS, XIII. 9, 10.

*Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost,  
set his eyes on him,*

*And said, "O full of subtilty, and all mischief, thou child of  
the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness! wilt thou not cease  
to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"*

A DREADFUL and dismal character to be given to a man by an apostle,—and an apostle, now 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' to give it. Take out but that little great clause, "Thou child of the devil,"—and there needs not much more to the picturing of the devil himself, in his proper colours and full proportion: "Full of all subtilty, full of all mischief, enemy of all righteousness, and the incessant perverter of the right ways of the Lord." How little needs there more to the limning out the prince of darkness himself, in his blackest complexion? What is it for these titles to be given to any man? But our apostle could very well discern between a brother and a sorcerer,—between a true Christian and a false prophet,—between a professor of the gospel, and a professed perverter of the ways of the Lord.

The text tells us, "he set his eyes upon him," and sees him through; he discovers what he is to the very bottom; and, accordingly, is warranted by the Holy Ghost, with whom he is filled, to give him these brands, "O thou full of all subtilty, and of all mischief, thou child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness!"

The two parties in mention were as different and contrary as light and darkness, as hell and heaven; the one an apostle,—the other, a sorcerer; the one, a most near servant of God,—the other, as near a servant of the devil; the one,



‘full of the Holy Ghost,’—the other, ‘full of all subtilty and mischief:’ and all the agreement that was between them (if that be any) was, that each of them had a double name: for Saul he was also called ‘Paul,’—and Bar Jesus, he was also called ‘Elymas.’

The reason of the apostle’s double name, I should look no farther for, than to his double relation, as he was a Jew born, and as he was a free-born Roman. His Hebrew name, ‘Saul,’ relates to his Hebrew original,—and his Roman name, ‘Paul,’ to his Roman privilege. And whereas he had been called by his Jewish name, ‘Saul,’ all along the story hitherto, while he had been conversing among the Jewish nation,—he being now appointed apostle of the Gentiles, and now set out upon that employment, he is called by his Gentile name all along henceforward, ‘Paul,’—and ‘Saul’ no more.

But the resolution about the conjurer’s double name is not so easy, and we shall not find Esau, in this matter, so smooth as Jacob.

First, As concerning his name ‘Bar Jesus;’ I believe it was almost as far from the signification of that blessed name that we adore, as he himself was from adoring him; and I believe, it was a very great way from the letters of that blessed name. In the Arabic translation, indeed, that we have in our Polyglot Bible, it is written with the very same letters. But in the translation, in that language, published by Erpenius, it is written otherwise, and better I doubt not; and yet I question, whether with the letters proper for it or no. I should derive his name ‘Jesus’ from the Hebrew word *עשׂו*, which signifies ‘contabescere,’ ‘morbo corrodi,’ to ‘languish,’ to ‘pine away,’ to ‘be eaten up with some malady;’ and, if I miscount not, you have it but three times in the Bible, and those in the Psalms; Psal. vi. 7, *עשׂוה עיני* rendered by our English, “Mine eye is consumed because of grief:” by the Interlineary Latin, “Erosus est præ indignatione oculus meus.” And the very same words you have, Psal. xxxi. 9; where our English renders after the same manner, and that Latinè, ‘contabuit;’ and in the very next verse after, *עצמי עשׂו* “My bones are consumed.” Now, the third person future of that word, if you would write it in Greek letters, you can hardly do it more properly, than in the word Jesus, that is before us.



And to this Hebrew word, I cannot but conceive, that the Syriac translator had an eye, when he writes not ‘Bar Jesus,’ but ‘Bar Shuma;’ by which he means not ‘filius nominis,’ ‘a man of name or renown,’ as some would have it, and as, indeed, it might signify,—but ‘a man of sores, swellings, or breakings-out:’ for so שומא is taken in Lev. xii. 2, in the Targum of Jerusalem, and Jonathan upon the law; and שומתא in Isa. i. 6, and elsewhere in the Targum of the other Jonathan upon the prophets. And how ‘Bar Shuma,’ ‘a man of sores’ agrees with ‘Bar Jesus,’ ‘a man wasting and languishing,’—I need not tell you.

But how doth ‘Elymas’ agree with both? ver. 8, “Elymas the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation.” But there is some scruple, which name is meant; whether his name ‘Bar Jesus,’ or his title ‘Magus.’ And that that hath been the currentest rendering hath been by the Arabic word عليم, which signifies “a knowing, a wise man:” and so may be bowed to the sense of ‘Magus.’ But both the Syriac and Arabic translators begin the word ‘Elymas’ with another letter. I learn from that incomparable work for pains and learning, the Heptaglot Lexicon,—that ‘Alima’ or ‘Elima’ (Aleph inchoant), in the Arabian tongue, signifies ‘dolere,’ or ‘cruciari,’ ‘to be in pain or anguish.’—And I think, I need to look no farther, how Elymas doth interpret ‘Bar Jesus,’ when the one signifies ‘contabescere,’ and the other ‘dolere;’ the one, ‘morbo corroditi,’—and the other, ‘cruciari,’—the words being so near akin.

It were worth inquiring, why his Hebrew name is rendered into Arabic, and not into Greek, as is generally done all along the New Testament with other names. But that discussion is not so proper for this time and occasion.

The man’s sickly names, therefore, ‘Bar Jesus’ or ‘contabescens,’ and ‘Elymas’ or ‘dolens,’ may justly make us to look upon him, as some pitiful, pining, languishing, diseased body. Which, whether that were so or no, is not much material; but certainly the titles, that the sacred historian and blessed apostle do give him, put it out of all question, that he carried a very sad, sickly, and diseased soul. The Jewish writers, when they would speak out a very wicked man indeed, say, that he “brake out לתרבות רשעא to the superfluity of naughtiness;” as our English renders the phrase turned



into Greek, *περισσεύων κακίας*, Jam. i. 21. Now, read this man's epithets, and guess, whether he could have 'broken out,' farther than he did. The holy penman calls him "a Jew, a false prophet, a sorcerer," ver. 6. The holy apostle calls him "full of all subtilty, full of all mischief, the child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness," in the verse before us. Titles, or epithets, or stigmata, or call them what you will, so foul, that an hour's discourse can speak but little to them of what might be, or what were, requisite to be spoken, to give every of them its due.

Therefore, to confine myself to the time, I shall confine my discourse only to his present action, upon which the apostle's eye is more peculiarly intent,—viz. that he 'perverted, and ceased not to pervert, the right ways of the Lord.' Into which sink of his, as into a common sewer, flowed all the rest of his puddles here mentioned,—some, as causes of his so acting,—and some, as instruments.

Hither flowed, as causes, his being a Jew, a false prophet, a sorcerer:—these set him on work. And hither flowed, as instruments, his subtilty, his mischievousness, his devilishness, his enmity against all righteousness: these helped him in his work. And what his work was, or what is meant by his 'perverting the right ways of the Lord,' we need not go far to learn, the eighth verse resolves it fully; "he withstood the apostles Barnabas and Paul: and he sought to turn away the deputy Sergius Paulus from the faith." He opposed the preaching of the gospel, and he opposed the conversion of the Gentile.

And such emissaries, some will tell you, the Jews had abroad in the world for such a purpose; subtle and mischievous men, sent abroad purposely to oppose, and contradict, and vilify, the gospel,—and to hinder, as much as possibly, the conversion of any heathen. It were too bold to say, this man was sent by the Sanhedrim upon such an employment. If he were not, they could hardly have fitted themselves better for such a business, than with him, so accomplished and accoutred for so cursed a design. The very mildest title that he carries,—viz. as he was a Jew,—speaks him capacitated and principled sufficiently for such an employment, had he been neither false prophet nor sorcerer.

Accordingly, I shall only take up that epithet and relation of his, and let all the rest alone, and consider him as a Jew,



and so acting, as a Jew, in this his cursed employment, "Not ceasing to pervert the right ways of the Lord," or to oppose the gospel.

If you scan and observe the demeanour of the devil in the two different ages of the world, under heathenism, and under the gospel,—you will find this to have been his method, and his shifting policy,—viz. that, under heathenism, he foisted upon the world the greatest lie, that could be forged in hell, to make the heathen believe, that the devils, that they served, were gods : and, under the gospel, when that lie would not do, he set men to oppose and contradict that greatest truth, that could be revealed from heaven, the truth and tenor of the gospel. And the first agents that he employed in this business, was the nation of the unbelieving Jews. A generation, by the very principles of their religion, fermented into a sourness and contrariety to the gospel, and the right ways of the Lord in it. Our apostle, in Rom. xi. 8, tells us, "They were under the spirit of slumber." And, 1 Thess. ii. 15, he intimates, how they were under a spirit of contradiction: "They are contrary to all men."—'Under the spirit of slumber,' so that all their religion was but a dream of men that slumbered; and 'under the spirit of contradiction,' so that all their acting was to oppose whatsoever was not according to that dream.

And that, that caused both these, was their drinking-in the enchantments of their traditions:—which drunkenness cast them into a deep sleep, and which made them rave and rage, whilst they thus slept.

It is very observable again, how Satan and the nation itself did shift and change the manner and means of their undoing. Before their captivity into Babylon, they were all for idolatry, and the devil cheated them with his great lie, as he did the heathen, to worship and sacrifice to devils instead of God. But, after that captivity, he something changed his temptation, and they became the means of their undoing; he persuading them to embrace another great lie, that of traditions, instead of that of idolatry; and they embracing it. They had so sorely smarted by the seventy years' captivity for their idolatry, that it was not so easy to bring them to that again; but he found it easy to foist upon them this other great lie, to make them believe, that every doting tradition, the invention of foolish men, was a divine oracle, de-



livered to Moses at mount Sinai, and so, from hand to hand, to all posterity.

The nation had been used to divine oracles, by visions, by prophets, by Urim and Thummim, all along. But now all these, under the second temple, were ceased and gone: and how should a people, that had been always used to such oracles, do without them? Here Satan saw his opportunity to cheat them with a Leah instead of Rachel, to impose upon them the famed oracularity of traditions, instead of the lively oracles of God: like the deceitful harlot in the Book of Kings, to lay a dead child in their bosom instead of a living: and this they wing, and cherish, and make much of, as if it were the living child, even to this day.

Now, how these traditions wrought with them, I may very well spare my labour to demonstrate,—the Gospels and Epistles do it so abundantly: that, “by their traditions, they transgressed the commandments of God,” Matt. xv. 3: that, by their traditions, “they made the word of God of none effect,” ver. 6: that, by their traditions, “they worshipped God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,” ver. 9: and, in a word, that they were led into “a vain conversation by the traditions, received from their fathers,” 1 Pet. i. 18.—Thus was it as to their effect in general; instances of particulars might be endless. I shall only mention three; and those that may be called the first three, as David’s three champions were, if I may mention so noble persons and so base things together.

First, These traditions of theirs made them dream, that Messiah should be a pompous temporal prince, arrayed with all earthly royalty and glory, and crowned with all terrene victoriousness and triumph. And this dream, under the spirit of slumber, cast them also under the spirit of opposition against the true Messiah, when he came. Poor Jesus looked so unlike the gallant Messiah they dreamed of, that, by the very principles of their traditions and religion, they could do no less to him, than what they did,—persecute, afflict, torment, crucify him. For he was not the Messiah they looked for,—but a false Christ, forsooth, a false prophet, a deceiver, a seducer of the nation.

Secondly, Their traditions made them dream, that Messiah and his law and doctrine, that he should bring with him, should be so far from abating or abolishing any of the cere-



monies of Moses, that he should rather add to them, heighten and enhance them. And this dream, under that spirit of slumber, cast them also under the spirit of opposition against the gospel. That is not for their turn, but against it, that cries down those ceremonies, and that justification they expected by them; that lays those shadows aside, and does, as it were, bury Moses, as Christ did his body, in the valley of Beth-peor. So that, with them, you cannot be a friend to Moses, unless you be an enemy to the doctrine of Jesus.

Thirdly, and lastly, Their traditions made them dream, that they were the only beloved of God of all people: that the seventy nations of the world were abhorred, hated, cursed of him, and were to be destroyed. But, oh! dearly loves he the seed of Israel! how entirely does he affect the children of Abraham!—And this dream, under the spirit of slumber, casts them also under the spirit of contradiction against the calling of the other nations. What! must those dogs eat of the children's bread? Must these children of the bond-woman come to be heirs with the children of the free? "They forbade us to speak unto the Gentiles, that they might be saved," saith the apostle in that place to the Thessalonians before quoted. And our Saviour must be cast down the steep hill, and dashed all to pieces, by his townsmen of Nazareth, for but hinting the calling of the Gentiles, in the story of Elias, sent to the widow of Sarepta,—and Naaman the Syrian sent to Elisha, and healed.

And thus briefly, from this short scantling, we may see, how this wretch before us was principled to oppose the gospel, and to resist the deputies' conversion, by the very dictates of his religion, as he was a Jew. How he might be forwarded and helped in his so acting by being a false prophet, and a sorcerer, by his subtilty and mischievousness, and by the rest of his devilish accommodations for such a purpose, I need not insist to demonstrate, the thing itself speaks it sufficiently.

So much, therefore, be spoken concerning his person, and his qualities, and conditions. Nor need we to stand gazing only upon him, since this day hath discovered some too like unto him. In the verses after my text, it is related, that this varlet was struck blind, and that he went up and down groping for some, that might take him by the hand and lead him. The memorial of this day may direct him, where to



find some, that may go hand in hand with him; and whether leads the other, it is no great matter; for whethersoever does, it is but the blind leading of the blind.

The day commemorates a fact and design, as black as all this wretch's titles. It commemorates men full of subtilty and mischief, as well as he; men that opposed the gospel, as well as he; and that were principled, by their very religion, to oppose it, as well as he: and men, who while they style themselves 'The Society of Jesus,'—by their principles and practices give suspicion, that they relate more to this Bar Jesus, which we have had in hand, than to him, upon whom they would father their denomination: men, I say, that are principled, by the very dictates and elements of their religion, to oppose the gospel and the sincere profession of it. And, indeed, you can expect no better from Rome, from whence these men's principles came, either from the place or from the religion.

I. For the place. The Holy Ghost hath spoken out the Numen of Rome, which was by no means named or known before; Rev. xiii. 2, "The dragon gave it his power and seat." For that Rome is there meant, hath not only the consent of the interpreters of old, and of the Protestants at this day, but even of the Romanists themselves, if you will but allow them the distinction of Rome, Heathen and Christian. And can any good thing be expected thence, where the dragon's donation is the founder of the power,—I doubt, more truly than Constantine's? And can the gospel but find opposition there, when there is such a power delegated from the great opposer? For you read not of any revocation or alienation of that conveyance of power.

II. As to her religion in after-times, and at this day, give me leave to use the words written upon the wall of Belshazzar's dining-room, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."

1. 'Mene.'—Number the doctrines of that church and religion one by one, and how great a company of them will prove to be like those of the Jews, but dreams of men, lying under the spirit of slumber! Universal bishopship,—Primacy,—infallibility,—power to pardon,—purgatory, and deliverance thence,—transubstantiation,—and multitudes more of the like fancy: the believing of which is but like his case in the prophet, that "dreameth that he eateth, and behold! he is still hungry; and dreameth that he drinketh,



but, behold! he is still thirsty, and his soul fainteth in him."

2. 'Tekel.'—Weigh their doctrines in the balances of Scripture, reason, and impartial judgment; and, how great a company of them will prove again like the Jewish, of no greater weight, than fond traditions, and the vain inventions of men,—even from the chair, wherein the king sitteth upon the throne, to the souls in purgatory, or the servant behind the mill.

3. Lastly, 'Perez.'—Divide their doctrines, that every one may have his part, to whom it belongs; and how great a share will fall to the unbelieving Jew, and how great a share to the apostatizer, or him that once believed, but was revolted, and fallen away!

These two were the great enemies and opposers of the gospel, in the apostles' times, before ever the heathen Rome began to persecute it. And these two, if my conjecture do not very much deceive me, made up the full measure of the stature of the antichrist, that the apostles, St. Paul and St. John, speak of, as extant in those very times. The former, the 'unbelieving Jew,' was the man in the parable, out of whom the unclean spirit was not yet cast. The 'apostatized Jew' was he, out of whom, indeed, that spirit had been cast, but was returned with 'seven other spirits, worse than himself,' and dwelt there again. The former opposed the gospel, by enforcing against it the rites and ceremonies of the law, and justification by it: the latter, by that also, as it would serve his turn; but, withal, abusing the liberty of the gospel against the sanctification of it.

These were the opposers of the gospel, before the heathen Roman persecution began to meddle with it. And when that ceased, after long succession of time, whether the same spirit and principles were not metempsychosed into Rome, now grown Papal, let any impartial censor judge, by comparing her strictness for Mosaic rites, and the looseness of her libertine doctrines. I am deceived, if the jubilee, now coming, speak not very fair and far towards the attestation of both these,—Mosaic strictness in proclaiming a jubilee,—and libertine looseness, in indulging so easy pardons.

If men's practices speak their principles, as this man's in the text did, we need not to rip so much into the principles of this church, elementing and indoctrinating to the oppos-



ing of the power, purity, and sincerity, of the gospel; her practices do make them legible abundantly, as written in capital letters of fire and blood. This day's memorial gives evidence sufficient, that I may not trouble you with raking into any more; which commemorates a design of cruelty and horror,—a design full of all subtilty, of all mischievousness, of all inhumanity, that remote ages to come will hardly believe, that a church, that takes on her to be the only holy catholic church, should ever breed so horrid a monster. And why so cruel against a harmless nation? What had we done, that we must be so destroyed? Abimelech's plea to God was, “Lord, wilt thou also destroy an innocent nation?” And God accepted his plea as good, and would not destroy it. But these men were deaf to any such pleading, and an innocent nation must perish, because it was so innocent. As all the crime of Abel, that must cost him his life, was, that he was more righteous than his brother,—so, all our guilt was, because we had the more righteous and pure religion. And, therefore, mother and child, our religion and we, must perish together.

As God by fire, sent from heaven, in the days of Elias, did determine the question, who was the true God, the Lord or Baal,—so he, by preventing this fire from hell, hath determined the question, betwixt Rome and us, which is the true religion, theirs or ours. O England! happy in thy gospel and religion, a religion doubly lovely and beautiful, Tirzah-like,—both because thou deservest the hate of such a people, and because God hath so owned thee against thy haters. Blessed be the great God of grace and truth, that hath planted thee; watered thee, preserved thee, and so shines upon thee. And so may it grow, and prosper, and flourish, and bring forth blessed fruit, under the same influence of heaven; and let all the people say, “Amen. Hallelujah.”



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED AT

GUILDHALL, LONDON,

JAN. 24, 1674.

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REV. XXI. 2.

*And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.*

AND no wonder, if there be a new Jerusalem, when, at the fifth verse of this chapter, God proclaims that he makes ‘all things new.’ And that ‘new Jerusalem’ must needs be a ‘holy city,’ when it is sent down from God, and comes out of heaven. And that holy city, coming from heaven, could not but be a most lovely prospect to him that saw it, when the old Jerusalem on earth had been once so lovely, that it was “the glory and joy of the whole earth,” Psal. xlviii.

Who it was that saw it, he himself tells you, speaking out his name,—‘John;’ by which, I suppose, there is none here, but understands the blessed apostle and evangelist of that name; though time hath been, that some have dreamed of another John, but no account could be given, who he was, or whence he came. I shall, therefore, in this matter, which, I believe, needs but little dispute now, only say these three things:—

I. That it is disagreeable to all reason to think, that our Saviour,—when he intended to do some man so much honour and favour, as to impart such noble and glorious visions and revelations to him, as are recorded in this book,—should pass by and skip over his own apostles and disciples, and should pick out a man, that, we all know, was no apostle,—that no one knows, whether he were a disciple or no. But,

II. It is agreeable to all reason to conceive, that, as the man, to whom God vouchsafed the revelation and discovery of the times and occurrences, that were to intervene betwixt his own times and the fall of Jerusalem, was “Daniel, a man greatly beloved;”—so that the John, to whom Christ would

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1196.



vouchsafe the revelation and discovery of the times and occurrences, that were to intervene betwixt the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world, was John, the disciple “greatly beloved.”

III. Of that disciple Christ had intimated<sup>a</sup>, that “he would, that he should tarry till he came;” that is, till he should come in vengeance against the Jewish nation and their city, to destroy them; for that ‘his coming,’ both in that place, and in divers other places in the New Testament, doth mean in that sense, it were very easy to make evident, should we take that subject to insist upon.

Now, as our Saviour vouchsafed to preserve him alive to see the fall and destruction of that city,—so, also, did he vouchsafe to him the sight of a ‘new Jerusalem,’ instead of the old, when that was ruined, laid in ashes, and come to nothing. He saw it in vision, we see it in the text; and upon that let us fix our eyes and discourse; for we need not speak more of him that saw it.

I. In the verse before, he sees “a new heaven and a new earth;” and in this verse, a “new Jerusalem.” Something parallel to which is that in Isa. lxxv. 17; “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.” And, in the verse next following, “Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing.” The expressions intimate the great change of affairs, that should be in the world under the gospel, from what had been before. A ‘new heaven,’ or a change of church and religion, from a Jewish to a Gentile church, and from Mosaic to evangelical religion:—a ‘new earth,’ or a change in the world, as to the management or rule of it, from heathenism to Christianity, and from the rule of the four heathen monarchies<sup>b</sup>, ‘to the saints,’ or Christians, ‘to judge the world<sup>c</sup>,’ or being rulers or magistrates in it.

And the ‘new Jerusalem’ is the emblem and epitome of all these things under this change, as the ‘old Jerusalem’ had been, before the change came. There is none but knoweth, that ‘Jerusalem,’ in Scripture-language, is very commonly taken for the whole church then being, as well as it is taken, particularly and literally, for the city itself then standing. That city was the church in little, because there were eminently in it all those things, that do make and constitute a true church,—viz. the administration of the

<sup>a</sup> John, xxi. 22.

<sup>b</sup> Dan. vii.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 2.



word and divine ordinances, the assemblies of the saints, the worship of the true God by his own appointment, and the presence of God himself in the midst of all. And can any doubt, but that the 'new Jerusalem' meaneth, in the like sense, and upon the like reason, 'the church of God under the gospel,'—this enriched with all those excellences and privileges, that that was, yea, and much more? There was the doctrine of salvation, but wrapped up in types, and figures, and dark prophecies; but here unfolded to the view of every eye, and Moses's veil taken off his face. There, ordinances of divine worship, but mingled with multitudes of carnal rites; here, pure adoration in spirit and truth: there, an assembly only of one people and nation; here, a general assembly compacted of all nations: there, God present in a cloud upon the ark; here, God present in the communication of his Spirit.

II. Therefore, it is the less wonder, that it is called the 'holy city,' because of these things,—which is the second circumstance considerable in the words, "I saw the new Jerusalem, the holy city." It is observable, that the second old Jerusalem (for so let me call the Jerusalem, that was built and inhabited after the return out of captivity) was called the 'holy city,' when goodness and holiness were clean banished out of the city, and become a stranger there. When the temple had lost its choicest ornaments and endowments, that contributed so much to the holiness of the place and city,—the ark,—the cloud of glory upon it,—the oracle by Urim and Thummim,—the fire from heaven upon the altar:—these were all gone, and prophecy was utterly ceased from the city and nation: yet even then it is called the 'holy city' in this her nakedness.

Nay, when the temple was become a den of thieves, and Jerusalem no better, if not worse; when she had persecuted the prophets, and stoned those, that were sent unto her; when she had turned all religion upside down, and out of doors, and worshipped God only according to inventions of men;—yet even then, and when she is in that case, she is termed the 'holy city;' Matt. iv. 5, "Then the devil taketh him up into the *holy city*, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple." Nay, when that holy evangelist had given the story of her crucifying the Holy of holies, the Lord of life and glory, even then he calls her the 'holy city,' chap.



xxvii. 53 ; “ The bodies of many saints, which slept, arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the *holy city*, and appeared to many.”

“ Call me not Naomi, but call me Marah,” might she very well have said then ; and so might others say of her ; for it might seem very incongruous to call her the ‘ *holy city*,’ when she was a city so very unholy. She was, indeed, simply and absolutely in herself, most unholy ; and yet, comparatively, ‘ the *holy city*,’ because there was not a place under heaven besides, which God had chosen to place his name there ; and there he had : and that was it, that gave her that name and title. And while she kept the peculiarity of the thing, she kept the name, but at last forfeited both ; and then God finds out another city where to place his name, “ a new Jerusalem, a *holy city*,” a holier city ; her younger sister fairer than she.

III. ‘ *Holy*,’ under the same notion with the other, because God hath placed his name only there : ‘ *holier*’ than she, because he hath placed it there in a more heavenly and spiritual manner than in her, as was touched before :—and holier still, because she shall never lose her holiness, as the other did,—as we shall touch hereafter. And she cannot but be holy, as I said before, when she “ comes down from heaven, and is sent thence by God.”

And this is the third thing remarkable in the text, “ I saw the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven.” The apostle St. Paul calls her ‘ *Jerusalem which is above*,’ Gal. iv. 26. Our apostle sees her coming down from above ; and the prophet Ezekiel, in his fortieth chapter and forward, seeth her pitched here below, when she is come down. She is above, and yet she is beneath :—much as the case was at Mount Sinai ; there was a tabernacle above, the heavenly pattern on the top of the mount ; and there was a tabernacle beneath, the material building and fabric at the foot.

“ *Jerusalem, that is above* ;” intimating, that it is not a material building, but a spiritual,—that the builder is not man, but God : and yet that Jerusalem is “ come down,” and is also here below, because it is among men, and consists of men ; men, “ as lively stones, being built up into a spiritual house and building,” as it is 1 Pet. ii. 5. Most commonly, in this book of the Revelation, she is called by the very name of ‘ *heaven*’ itself ; that where you read ‘ *heaven*,’ you



must understand the 'church,' partly, because she is the only heaven, that is upon earth; partly, because of the presence of God in the midst of her, as in heaven; partly, because of the holy and heavenly things that are in her; and partly, because she is the gate of heaven, and the only passage whereby to come thither. Upon all which accounts together, it is no wonder, that she carries the name of the "heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city," and the holy city, "that came down from God."

And let this suffice to be spoken concerning the meaning of the 'new Jerusalem,' or what it is,—viz. the gospel-church. The great question and dispute is, Where it is? And whereas our apocalyptic saw it coming down from heaven, the great inquiry is, Where it lighted, pitched, and took its station? Where is the house of the Prince, and where is this city of the great King? Where is the true church, this new Jerusalem? The finding where it is not, will be some direction how to seek it, where it is: and let us begin there first.

I. First, therefore, let me say in this case, much like what was said of old by the historian concerning the city Samnium, "You may look for Samnium there, where Samnium stood, and cannot find it." If you look for the new Jerusalem there, where the old Jerusalem stood, you will not find it there: though the Jew would have you to look no where else, and have it to be found no where else. It is well known, what the conception and expectation of that nation is in this point: how they look for a most stately Jerusalem, to be built where the old one stood,—for a pompous kingdom settled in the land of Canaan, suitable to such a city,—and for a pompous Messiah riding in the midst of both, with stateliness suitable to both. I shall say no more to this opinion, but, briefly, only this,—for it is not worth speaking much unto,—That this opinion helped forward the murder of the true Messiah, when he came among them. And I much wonder, whether the opinion, that produced so bad an effect then, can come to any good effect at any time. Because our Saviour, poor Jesus, did not bring so much pomp and gallantry with him, as that opinion expected, he was looked upon by them as a false Messiah; and, under that notion, they made him suffer. And it is more than suspicious, that such an opinion can prove good, solid, and successful never, that proved so very fatal and mischievous then.



It is true, indeed, that the prophet Ezekiel doth delineate his visionary Jerusalem, as seated in the very place, where the old had been: for, indeed, there was then a Jerusalem to be built there, as it was after the return out of captivity. But whosoever shall take measure of the dimensions, that he giveth to his city in space and compass, will find it to come near, if not to equal, the space and compass of the whole land of Canaan. And this apocalyptic, the best interpreter of that prophet, measuring his square new Jerusalem, at ver. 16 of this chapter, finds it to be twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles, upon every side of the square, six thousand miles about; and the wall about it, also, fifteen hundred miles high: the “wall of salvation<sup>d</sup>.” So that these things considered, a mystical or spiritual sense is enforced here, and for a literal one there is left little or no room at all. And we must look for the ‘new Jerusalem’ somewhere else, than where the old one stood; for there is not room for it. Where, then, shall we seek next, since we cannot find it there? Here,

II. I cannot but remember the story in 2 Kings vi:—The Syrians are seeking Elisha at Dothan, and he strikes them blind; and “This is not the way (says he), this is not the city; but follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek;—and he brought them to Samaria.” We are seeking the ‘new Jerusalem;’ and there are those, that will tell you (but you must let them blindfold you first), that you of London, we of England, are out of the way, if we look for any ‘new Jerusalem,’ any true church, here among us; but follow them, and they will lead you, where it is, and they will bring you to Rome. A place where I should as little seek for the ‘new Jerusalem,’ as I should have sought for the old Jerusalem in Samaria; or as I should have sought for true worshippers, and the place of true worship, at Sichem, and mount Gerizim. When they pretend to lead you to the new Jerusalem, and bring you to Rome,—they could hardly lead you to any place under heaven more unlikely where to find the ‘new Jerusalem,’ than there.

Our divines, in their writings, have evidenced this abundantly, and I shall not trouble you with rehearsing any thing they have spoken. I shall only lay these four scriptural considerations before you, easy to understand and carry

<sup>d</sup> Isa. xxvi. 1.



away; and even out of them, let any impartial judgment censure and determine in this case. And, first, two concerning the place and city: and then, two concerning the church and religion.

I. Concerning the place and city:—

First, As the new Jerusalem is never mentioned in Scripture, but with an honourable and noble character,—so Rome, on the contrary, is never spoken of, under any name or title, but with a character as black and dismal. One memoir only excepted (which is, in her story, as Abijah was in the family of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 13,—the only one there, in whom was found any thing that was good): and that is, that there was once a church there, whose “faith was renownedly spoken of through the whole world,” Rom. i. 8. There was so, indeed, and there could not be an antichristian church there, unless there had been a Christian church there first: since, “There must be a falling away first, that the man of sin might be revealed,” 2 Thess. ii. 3.

The first mention, that you have of Rome in Scripture, is in Num. xxiv. 24, under the name of ‘Chittim:’ and there it is branded for the great oppressor and afflicter of nations: and it is finally doomed to ‘perish for ever.’

Secondly, You have mention of her armies, Dan. ix. 27; but with this brand upon them, that they are called “The abominable army, that maketh desolate;” there styled, by their Vulgar Latin, as in Matt. xxiv, “the abomination of desolation.”

But, thirdly, That which tops up all, is, that she is called ‘Babylon,’ in this book of the Revelation, and described there as she is. For that by ‘Babylon,’ is meant ‘Rome,’—the Romanists themselves will readily grant you, if you will grant them the distinction of Rome pagan and Christian, imperial and pontifical. And the last verse of chap. xvii, puts the matter out of all doubt, where it says, that “the woman, the scarlet whore, which thou sawest, is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Upon which every one, that is acquainted with the Rome-history, must needs conclude, that no city can there be understood like the city Rome.

Now, it is a very improper inquest, to look for the new Jerusalem, in a place that must ‘perish for ever;’ to look for the holy city among the ‘abominable armies;’ and to look



for Sion, the city of God in Babylon, that ‘mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.’

Secondly, Whereas old Jerusalem, and the Jewish nation, incurred so great a curse and guilt for the murder of the Lord of life, as we all know it did; it requireth very cogent arguments to prove, that Rome, that had a hand as deep in that murder, should obtain so great a blessing and happiness on the contrary, as to be the only church in the world, and the mother of all churches. There is no Christian but knoweth, how deep a hand Jerusalem had in that horrid fact: and he knoweth but little, that knoweth not, that Pontius Pilate was deputy for Rome there,—and how deeply also he was engaged in it, as her deputy.

And so much be spoken concerning the very place, and how unlikely it is to find the new Jerusalem there. How improper it is to imagine, that that should be the city of God, of which God himself, in his word, speaks not one good word, but evil: to imagine, that he should choose that, of all cities, for his dearest spouse, that, of all cities, had the deepest hand in the murder of his dear Son.

II. Concerning their church and religion. If these men, that pretend to lead men to the new Jerusalem, and lead them to Rome, would but speak out, and plain, and tell them, that they will lead them to the old Jerusalem, and so lead them to Rome,—they speak something likely. For what is the church and religion of Rome, but, in a manner, that of old Jerusalem, translated out of Judaic into Roman, and transplanted out of Palestina, into Italy? And there is hardly an easier or a clearer way to discover, that she is not the new Jerusalem, than by comparing her with the old: as God doth most clearly discover the Jerusalem then being, Ezek. xxiii, by comparing her with Samaria and Sodom. Divers hours would scarce serve, to observe the parallel in all particulars, and punctually to compare the transcript with the original; I shall only and briefly hint two things to you to that purpose. And,

First, Let me begin with that distinction, that the Jews have in their writings once and again; of the Mosaic law, and the Judaic law,—or the law of Moses, and the law of the Jews. And they will tell you, such and such things are transgressions of the Mosaic law,—and such and such, are transgressions of the Judaic law. And as they themselves



do make the distinction, so they themselves did cause the distinction. What they mean by the Mosaic law, we all understand; and by their Judaic law, they mean their 'traditional' law, which they call the 'law unwritten.' While they kept to the law of Moses, for a rule of faith and life, as they did under the first temple,—they did well in point of doctrine, and no heresy and heterodoxy tainted them: but when they received and drank in traditions, as they did under the second temple, they drank in their own bane and poison.

There is in Scripture frequent mention of the 'last days,' and the 'last times:' by which is meant, most commonly, the 'last days of old Jerusalem, and of the Jewish economy,' when they were now drawing towards their dissolution. But from what date or time to begin her last days, may be some question. If you date them from the time, she first received and entertained her traditions,—you do but fit the calculation to the nature of the thing calculated. For then did she fall into the consumption and disease, that brought her to her grave: then did she catch that infection and plague, that never left her, but grew upon her, till it made her breathe her last in a fatal end. Traditions spoiled her religion, and brought her to "worship God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men<sup>e</sup>." Traditions spoiled her manners, and trained her up in a "vain conversation, received by tradition from the fathers<sup>f</sup>;" in a word, traditions, as they made the law, so they made the gospel, of no effect; and the doctrine of Christ, the death of Christ, the belief in Christ, to be but needless business, and things to no purpose. Nay, traditions leavened them to hate the gospel, to murder Christ, and to persecute his disciples: for, by the principles of their traditions, they could do no less than all these.

Now, surely, Jerusalem that is above, is above this infection; and the new holy city, certainly brought no such infection from heaven, nor was tainted with this contagion, which was the death of the old: as a priest in Israel could hardly be infected with leprosy. But you may see the tokens upon the church of Rome very thick; traditions upon traditions; some of so like stamp to those of old Jerusalem, that you can hardly know them asunder; but all of the like

<sup>e</sup> Matt. xv. 9.      <sup>f</sup> 1 Pet. i. 18.



effect and consequence, that they make the gospel of none effect, as those did the law; and causing men to worship God in vain, while they “taught for doctrines the commandments of men.” How great a part of their religion is nothing else but the commandments of men, and other traditions, and how great a part of their church is built upon nothing else! The very chief corner-stone in all their fabric, is of no better substance and solidity,—viz. that St. Peter was bishop there, and there was martyred;—when the Scripture and reason give a far fairer probability, that he was apostle to the circumcision in Babylonia, and there ended his days.

Secondly, You would hardly think, that there was a worse brood in the old Jerusalem, than those that we have spoken of; the men so infected with the plague (and with a frenzy with it) of traditions. And yet I can name you a worse,—and that was those, that had forsaken their Judaism, and entertained and embraced the gospel,—but at last apostatized from it, and revolted to their old Judaism again; to their old Mosaic rites, which sometime had been right, but now antiquated,—and to their traditional principles, which had never been right, but now least of all to have been embraced; and to a deadly hatred and persecution of the gospel, that they once professed.

How the apostles speak of, and against, this apostasy, in their Epistles, I need not tell you; he that runs, may read it. But he that stands still, and reads pressly, will find, that they find ‘the antichrist,’ that then was, in that apostasy. I say, ‘the antichrist, that then was.’ For the Scripture gives a hint of a twofold antichrist,—one, in the Epistles,—and the other, in this book of the Revelation; one, that was in those times,—and the other, that was to be afterward; one, among the Jews that had embraced the gospel,—and the other, among the Gentiles, which should embrace it. And if you will let the unbelieving Jew, to be one part of the antichrist, that then was,—the apostatized Jew was much more. “Many antichrists” in those times, as this our apostle tells us, 1 John ii. 18; but those were they especially, of whom he speaks immediately after; “They went out from us, but they were not of us.” And the like character do these apostates carry in other places in the Epistles, in terms equivalent.



Now, therefore, the nearest way to discover the antichrist, that was to be in after-times among the Gentiles, is by observing his likeness and similitude to the former,—viz. in apostatizing from the pure and sincere profession of the gospel to Judaism, or to Mosaic manner of worship, and Judaic principles and religion.

Which how the church of Rome hath done, it would require a long time to compare in all particulars; but it will require a far longer time for her to clear herself from that just accusation. How near doth she come to Judaism in the doctrine of justification! how near in the doctrine of ‘opus operatum!’ how near in the doctrine of expiation, by bare confession! how near in the doctrine of the value of traditions! and, one for all, how near in turning all religion into ceremony! Their present year of jubilee, is it not Mosaic? And were you there at it, and saw the manner of their devotions, their formal services, and ceremonious worship, would you not think you were in the old Jerusalem, among the scribes and Pharisees, rather than in the new, where the ‘true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and truth?’

So that when we departed from the church of Rome, we did but the same thing, that the apostles, disciples, and other holy converts of the Jewish nation did; they forsook Judaism, to embrace the purity of the gospel; and so did we: and, “in the way that they call heresy, we worship God.”

If I have trespassed too much upon your patience by so prolix a discourse upon so unpleasing a subject, I must crave your pardon. We, inquiring after the ‘new Jerusalem,’ where we might find it, come to the place, where the ways parted; and one went right, and the other wrong. The wrong way, is the broader, pleasanter, and more trodden; and not a few that stand in it, and cry, ‘This is the right way, and no other.’ It is good to give warning, it is needful to take warning,—that we be not misled, that the men and the way do not deceive us.

And having thus far observed, where the ‘new Jerusalem’ is not to be found, let us now look where it is.

And, first, we must not expect to find it in any one particular place, as you might have done the old Jerusalem; but it is dispersed here and there abroad in the world. It is the Catholic church, as we are taught in our Creed; and it is not



in one only, but in this, and that, and the other, nation. When the new Jerusalem is to be measured, in Zech. ii, an angel bids, "O run after yonder young man, that is to measure it, and tell him, that Jerusalem shall be inhabited as a city without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle that shall be therein." It is a city unlimited, and therefore not to be bounded within this or that compass. We may use this paradox of it,—that it is a fluid, and yet a fixed body; nay, fixed, because fluid: that is, it is moving sometime into one place, sometime into another; and, therefore, it shall never fade or perish.

The Jews accused St. Stephen of heresy and blasphemy, because he said, that the church and religion should not always be pinned to that city and temple, but taken away. In his answer he sheweth, that the church and religion is a pilgrim,—one while, in one place,—another while, in another; in Mesopotamia, in Charran, in Canaan, in Egypt. And our own observation may tell us, that, when it failed in Egypt, and Israel followed the idols and manners of that land, as Ezek. xx, then God found himself a church in the family of Job and his three friends. The saying of our Saviour may suffice for this, "The kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a people, that shall bring forth the fruits of it." And this is that, that makes it fixed, or never-failing; because, when it decayeth in one place, it groweth in another. And that promise of our Saviour will ever maintain it in life and being, "Upon this rock will I build my church *of the gospel*, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it;" as they have done against the church of the Jews.

In Matt. xxiv, when Christ foretells of the desolation of that city, church, and nation, that their "sun, and moon, and stars," religion, and church, and state, "should be darkened, and fall," and come to nothing; and "they should then see the Son of man," whom they would never own, "coming in a thick cloud," and storm of vengeance against them;—it might be questioned, Where, then, will God have a church, when that is gone? He gives an answer, "That the Son of man should send his angels," or ministers, "with the sound of a trumpet," the trumpet of the gospel, "and gather him a church from all the corners under heaven." To which may not improperly be applied that, Heb. xii. 22; "Ye are



come to an innumerable company of angels." God will never want his church ; but, if it be not in one place, it will be in another.

Secondly, There is an invisible church as well as a visible ; Paul's Jerusalem, which is above and out of sight, as well as Ezekiel's Jerusalem, pitched here below. There is commonly some invisible church within the visible, as Ezekiel's wheel within a wheel. But there is sometimes an invisible church, where there is none visible, as those seven thousand men in the days of Elias, when he could not discern one. The apostle, speaking of the new Jerusalem, that we are speaking of, in that place of the Epistle to the Hebrews before alleged, among other things, saith, "Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched,"—meaning mount Sinai,—“but ye are come to mount Sion.” One would think, when he spake of mount Sinai, he should rather have called it, “the mount that might not be touched ;” for God charged, that neither man nor beast should touch it<sup>g</sup>. But you may see the apostle's meaning,—that the mystical mount Sion is not such a gross earthly thing, as mount Sinai was, that was subject to sense and feeling, to be seen, and felt, and trod upon ; but that Sion is a thing more pure, refined, and abstract from such sensibleness, spiritual and heavenly.

And from this undeniable notion of a church invisible, we may easily answer that captious and scornful question, that you know who put upon us,—‘Where was your church and religion before Luther?’ Why, it was in the Jerusalem that is above, out of the reach, and above the ken, of man's discerning ; it was upon mount Sion, above the sphere of sight and sense. It was in such a place and case, as the church and religion was in, when there were “seven thousand men, that never bowed the knee τῇ Βάαλ,” to the golden heifer at Dan or Beth-el : and yet the greatest prophet, then being, could not discern the least sign of any church at all. Now,

Thirdly, The ‘new Jerusalem’ must be known by her pearls and jewels, upon which it is founded and built up. True religion is that, that must distinguish and discover the true church. And where that is, it is like the wise men's star over the house at Beth-lehem, that points out, and tells, ‘Jesus and his church is here.’ I must confess, I do not

<sup>g</sup> Exod. xix.



well understand that concession of some of our Protestant divines, that yield, 'That the church of Rome is a corrupt church, indeed, but yet a true church:—for I do not well understand, how there should be a true church under a false religion. If the church of the Jews, under the great corruption of religion, that was in it, might be called a true church,—that was all it could look for. And it must have that title, rather because there was never a church in the world beside it, than from any claim by religion. But what do you call true religion?

1. First, That, which is only found in the word of God; as the wall of the new Jerusalem, in ver. 14 of this chapter, is founded upon "twelve pearls, engraven with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

2. That religion, that tends directly to the honouring of God, and saving of souls, and is adequate to these ends; in short, that religion that can bring to heaven.—For I so little believe, that any man may be saved in any religion, that I believe there is only one religion, in which any man may be saved. And when Moses can bring Israel only to the skirts of the land of promise, I hardly believe that any religion will bring them into it.

Though one should not stick to grant, that a person may be saved in the church of Rome, yet should I question, whether in the faith of Rome. And it is the faith or doctrine of a church more especially, that I mean by the religion of it. Let a Romanist ride all the stages of his religion, from his uncouth kind of baptism to his extreme unction, through his auricular confessions and absolutions, through his penances and pardons, through his massings and crossings, through all his devotions and austerities;—will all these bring to heaven, if the main fundamentals of faith be faulty and failing? nay, if the main fundamentals of belief be clean contrary to the way of God to heaven? A scribe or Pharisee, in old Jerusalem, is as devout in religion, and as strict and severe in outward conversation, as is imaginable, that you would think sanctity itself were there: yet, will all this bring to heaven, when the chief principles of his faith are directly contrary to the way of salvation? while he believes to be justified by his own works, and places all in 'opere operato,' in a little formal and ceremonial service? Like him in the story and on the stage, that cried, 'O! heaven,' and



pointed down to the earth; these pretended for heaven in their practical devotions, but pointed downward in their doctrinal principles.

I shall not insist to illustrate those particulars, that I mentioned; I suppose they carry their own proof and evidence with them, that they are most proper touchstones, whereby to try the truth of a church and religion. And it is our comfort, that we can, that we do, that we desire to, bring our religion to such tests and touchstones,—and refuse not, but most gladly appeal to the impartial Judge, the word of God, to give judgment of it. I shall not, therefore, undertake so needless a task, as to go about to prove the truth of our faith and religion, since so many Protestant pens have so clearly and so abundantly done it, far more learned than my tongue: and since I may make such an appeal to you, as the apostle did to king Agrippa, “King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know, thou believest:”—Fathers and brethren, believe you the truth of our religion? I know, you believe it.—Then I have no more to do but to offer two or three words of humble exhortation and entreaty,—viz. prize it; cleave to it; beautify it.

I. Prize it: for it is the chiefest jewel in all our cabinet: and the wisest merchant in all your city cannot find out a pearl of greater price. It is the life of our nation at home, and it is the honour of our nation abroad: it is that, that makes our land, a royal street of the new Jerusalem: it is that, that must make your city a holy city.

We see a new London, as our apocalyptic saw a new Jerusalem. The buildings stately and magnificent, the furniture sumptuous and very splendid, the shops rich and bravely furnished, the wealth great and very affluent: but your religion the all-in-all. As it was said in old time, that Athens was the Greece of Greece, and as it may be said at this time, that London is the England of England,—so let your religion be the London of London. It is that by which your city must stand and flourish; by which your prosperity must be watered and maintained; and the ancile, which, kept in safety, will keep us in safety.

II. Keep, therefore, close to your religion, and leave it not. Dread revolting from the true religion. The apostasy in the apostles' times was the ‘sin unto death,’ in our apocalyptic's First Epistle and last chapter. And there is an apos-



tasy in our time but too common, and to be deplored with tears, to a religion but too like to that, to which they then revolted. I would, therefore, that those, that are tempted either by the lightness of their own hearts, or by the emissaries of Rome, to revolt from their religion, would remember that dreadful saying of the apostle<sup>h</sup>, "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth,—there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary." Which is spoken peculiarly of apostasy; or else it were a passage too terrible for all flesh.

Hannibal's father took him, at nine years of age, to an altar, and there swore him never to have confederacy and friendship with Rome. If all the world had always been under such a tie, it had been happy for it. I hope our religion, our hearts, our God, will keep us from entering into league and society with that city, that had so deep a hand in the murder of our dear Saviour, and in the blood of his dear saints.

III. Lastly, Let us strive to adorn our religion with a suitable conversation; to beautify our church with the beauty of holiness. We desire to be owned for citizens of the new Jerusalem: and whereas our religion may give us some title to it, it is holiness of conversation, that must naturalize and enfranchise us. The new Jerusalem doth challenge a new conversation: and doth not a new London, new hearts and lives? The city, so stately and sumptuously built up, if such top-stones be laid on, we may comfortably and joyfully cry, "Grace, grace, peace, peace, unto it."

<sup>h</sup> Heb. x. 26.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED ON

EXOD. xxx. 15.

*The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel,—when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.*

IT is our duty to love all men; and a reason of it is, our likeness to all men: they have souls like ours; their souls have all the image of God as well as ours, and capable of the fruition of God, and eternal glory, as well as ours. Which parity, whether it be not fairly intimated in the words of the text, judge you, when God, for atonement for souls, sets a value to all people alike; the rich and poor to meet in one and the same sum, and not one to pay more or less than another, but all alike. “The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel.” This may seem to be something an unequal rating, and the rich to be set too low, and the poor too high.

But to give a clear account of this matter, let us consider,

I. Of the sum that was to be given; ‘half a shekel.’

II. The end for which it was given; ‘To be a ransom or atonement for souls.’ And then,

III. The parity that is to be in this payment, none to exceed above, nor none to abate beneath, another: but all to pay alike.

I. The sum is half a shekel.—Now, their shekel was of the value of our half-crown, and the half-shekel was half as much. And as our half-crown is either in one piece, or hath five six-pences to make it up in value;—so they had their shekel, either in one piece, or four pieces to make it up. Those four pieces, in the Greek language, were called drachms,—in the Hebrew, zuzees,—in Latin, pennies. And so the Greek renders the half-shekel here, ‘two drachms.’ And the ‘two pennies,’ that the good Samaritan gave<sup>b</sup>, is the very same sum,—viz. half a shekel: the Roman penny being

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1204.

<sup>b</sup> Luke, x. 35.



seven-pence half-penny, and two of them making half a shekel, or fifteen-pence.

And that sum of twopence, that the good Samaritan lays down, is very properly mentioned in that case. For as here the half-shekel, which was in value twopence, is to be given for atonement of souls,—so there, the twopence, which was in value half a shekel, is given for recovery of life.

Two things concerning this half-shekel, here mentioned, are observable in the New Testament:—

First, That the money-changers' tables, that our Saviour overthrew in the temple, were the tables of the collectors and receivers of this half-shekel. And why, then, should he overthrow their tables, when the money they received, was of God's appointment? It was, indeed; but the wretched receivers made a base trade of getting gain by changing their money: and for giving them single money for their whole shekel, or half-crown piece, they must be paid some profit. This is that, that made our Saviour kick down their tables,—and not any crossness against the sum, which was of God's own appointment.

Secondly, In that story, Matt. xvii. 24, it is this half-shekel money, that they come to demand; which Christ rather than he will not pay, will fetch it, by miracle, out of a fish's mouth. Now,

II. What was the end or reason of this gift or payment? It was for the ransom of a soul, for the atonement of a soul. Where by 'soul' is not strictly meant that inward part of man properly so called, but his life and person; for so the word 'soul' signifies also, in Scripture, very often. As, instead of more, for the first signification,—viz. 'soul' for 'life,'—take that of David, "Let them be cut off, that seek after my *soul*." For the last, 'soul' for 'person,' that in Exod. i. 5, "All the *souls*, that came out of the loins of Jacob, were seventy *souls*." The meaning is, that this parcel of money was yearly to be paid, as a payment or tribute to God, for the preservation of their lives and persons. And that may be observed by these two things:

First, This was an extraordinary oblation, and not the like commanded in the whole law; i. e. any offering of money. Lambs, and goats, and bullocks, were commanded to be offered, but as for the offering of money, there was this payment only. Now, the sacrifices of lambs and bullocks were



more properly for the atonement of their souls,—viz. for the pardon of their sins, and the withholding or removing of judgment. But this peculiar and extraordinary one of money, was for the peculiar and extraordinary end,—viz. for the ransom or preservation of their life and person.

Secondly, This you may find hinted in ver. 12; “When thou numberest the people, they shall give every one a ransom for their souls, lest there be a plague among them.” This must be a ransom for their lives, to keep the plague, or any other deadly occurrence, away, that might take away their lives, or destroy their persons.

III. The parity or equality in the payment of this sum: “The rich no more, and the poor no less.” The reason of which when we come to weigh, let us be sure to do it in God’s own balances, or we may easily be mistaken. What! the rich pay no more than the poor, and the poor as much as the rich! A gallant would scorn to be so ranked with the poor, to pay no more than he; and the poor would grudge to be rated with the rich, to pay as much as he. But he that ordained the payment, saw very good reason for what he did; and would that they rest in his ordaining, and learn somewhat from such appointing. “The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less.”

And now, let us look over these three things again, and consider what may be learned from them.

I will transpose, a little, these particulars, and speak of the second first,—viz.

I. The end and purpose, for which this sum was given, to wit, as an acknowledgment and an owning, that their lives and persons were in the hand of God, and that to him they looked for their preservation: and therefore it was, that they paid this sum, for the ransom of their lives. So that as the payment of this money was a duty,—so it was a doctrine, teaching them to own their depending upon God for their lives and beings. So that hence we learn, ‘That every man is to own his dependance upon God for his life and being.’

The Jews were taught it by their being bound to pay a yearly tribute to God for the preservation of their life and being: and we taught it from their example. And I speak to this subject the more willingly, because the thing and the time do concur so fair together; so that the subject we speak of, is not only useful and necessary, but seasonable



and agreeable both to their time and ours. Concerning their payment of this poll-money, or dependance-money,—their own writers tell us, that the collectors of this tax began upon the collection of it the last month of their year; and so went on gathering, in the beginning of the new year. That we are come to the last month, nay, the last week, of our year, doth very justly give us occasion to remember our preservation on the year that is now gone over our heads, and all the years of our life hitherto; and to consider of that merciful and good providence, that hath preserved us all along those years. And this, and hardly a more seasonable discourse, can we take up at this time, than such a one, as shall remind us, and, if it may be, warm us with a feeling of our dependance upon God for our preservation.

Need I to divide the theme before us, and prove apart, That our dependance is upon God for our preservation: and, That we are to be sensible of this dependance? We can hardly find a place in Scripture that proves the one, but it proves both together: and none there are hardly but if they acknowledge the truth of the thing, that men's dependance is upon God for their preservation, but they acknowledge also their sense of it, and that they so own their preservation.

I might instance multitudes of places; but do I need, when there is not a holy man through all the Bible, that speaks of his own preservation, but he owns it to have been from God, and shows himself to have been sensible of it? “Thou hast given me life, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit<sup>a</sup> :” “It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed<sup>b</sup> ;” and, “Having obtained help of God<sup>c</sup>,” &c. There is not a person in Scripture, that takes notice of the preserving of his life and person, but he always turns it that way, to own God the author of it; unless it be such a fool as he, that bids, “Soul, take thine ease,” &c; or as he, “Is not this great Babylon that I have built,” &c; or they that say, “To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain :” and never mention God or his providence in the bargain.—I hope I need not prove, that all our lives, persons, and the preservation of both, are in the hand of God, and at his disposal; but I may sum up all in

<sup>a</sup> Job, x. 12.<sup>b</sup> Lam. iii. 22.<sup>c</sup> Acts, xxvi. 22.



this challenge and appeal,—Dare any defy God's providence and preservation, and take upon you your own preservation, and to maintain your life and person, of yourselves?—

But let not such a thing be once mentioned among Christians: but the great business is, that Christians would become rightly sensible of their dependance upon God.

I cannot omit one thing in this law about paying this half-shekel,—viz. ver. 14; That every one, that was twenty years old and upward, was to pay it.—And why then? and why not before? Not but that they, that were under twenty years old, were under the same preservation, and had reason to acknowledge the same preservation: but, at twenty years of age, they were come to that age, as should be the age of discretion; and that men should now consider under what tuition they lived; and that then it was time to own it;—though folly and vanity of youth had not suffered them to do so before. And twenty years of age was the time, when they were in their prime, and strength, and flush, and when it was the likeliest time to think of their own strength and vigour, and that they stood upon their own subsistence. Then, and forward, it was most seasonable to admonish them upon what it was that they subsisted, and who it was that preserved them.

The acknowledgment, that it is God, that doth preserve our life and being, may be of the tongue only, and nothing but words, or bare conviction of the truth of the thing, and but little more than words neither. But a feeling acknowledgment of God's preservation is such a thing, as speaks itself by some evident demonstration. It is the apostle's saying, that “saving faith worketh by love:” we may say the like of ‘historical faith:’ if it work at all, it worketh by some evidence or demonstration of action: and such evidences or demonstrations, in this case, are various.

I. Such a person, who owns, and feelingly believes, his dependance upon God for his preservation, is careful to commit himself to God's protection, and his preserving providence, the best he can. We read of persons being under the wings of the Almighty, and putting themselves under his wings; and they are there, because they put themselves there. “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust<sup>d</sup>.” How comes he there? He puts

<sup>d</sup> Psal. xci. 4.



himself there by committing himself to God's providence, as he ought to do:—as Ruth did, chap. ii. 12. “Thou savest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore shall the sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings<sup>e</sup>.” There is a general providence, that preserves man and beast; but a peculiar protection for them, that put themselves under the shadow of his wings.

Can we say, that man is under God's protection, that never put himself under God's protection? Can we say, God keeps that, that was never committed to him?—Such a one is a worldling, an epicure, that minds not God, nor his duty of committing himself to him.—Yes, you will say, for this man lives, and is preserved as well as the best; he is kept out of danger as well as the holiest: he is in health, wealth, and a thriving condition, as well as another man; and, therefore, sure God keeps him as well as another: “he preserves, indeed, man and beast,” as the Psalmist tells us,—and so he is preserved, as beasts are preserved: but he owns not God in his preservation no more than they.

A man that rightly owns his dependance upon God, commits himself to God by prayer, beseeching him to take him to his care and charge. Thus the saints of God have ever put themselves under his wings. “I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be feared; and so shall I be saved from mine enemies:” this was David's way to be in safety and preservation continually: and it is according to God's direction<sup>f</sup>, “Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will deliver thee.” So Jacob<sup>g</sup> commits himself to God's protection, when he is going for Syria, by prayer and a vow: “If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,” &c. And such another copy you have of Jabez<sup>h</sup>, “And Jabez called upon the Lord God of Israel, saying, ‘O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.’ And God granted him that, which he requested.” This is the way to engage God to our preservation,—when we thus cast ourselves upon him, and implore his care of us.

II. They that own their dependance upon God for preservation and protection, put themselves under his protection

<sup>e</sup> Psal. xxxvi. 6, 7.

<sup>f</sup> Psal. l. 15.

<sup>g</sup> Gen. xxviii. 20.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Chron. iv. 9.



in the way of his protection. Do you think, that God's merciful protection dwells every where, and that a man may promise himself to meet with it every where; in an idle temple, a whore-house, lewd company? He that walks in a wicked course of life; can he expect, God's merciful providence will meet with him here? The apostle<sup>i</sup> tells us, how to put ourselves under God's protection; "To commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing." And David<sup>k</sup>, long before, "Do good, and, verily, thou shalt be fed." Keep in his ways, and he will keep thee; be doing his work, and he will take care of thee: but canst thou expect his protection and care, when thou art in the ways of the devil, and doing the work of the devil?—A Christian should always be doing of that, as that he may lawfully and warrantably beg God's blessing upon him, while he is doing it. Join prayer and well-doing together, and thou art sure to speed well.

III. He that owns his dependance upon God, aims that his preservation be to the service of him, that preserves him. As he owns, that he lives upon God, so he aims to live to him. This use of God's preserving providence Jacob<sup>l</sup> aimed at; "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way, &c. so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God." And David<sup>m</sup>; "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." And it pinched Job<sup>n</sup>, that he should any way have failed of it; "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?" Hast thou preserved me, and do I sin against thee, contrary to the end I should have aimed at under thy preservation?—Reason, and the very light of nature, may argue to such a purpose, that, in all equity and justice, he that is maintained by God, should be serviceable to God. We look for service of our servants and beasts; and, all the reason in the world, God should have it from men.

IV. He that owns his dependance upon God, observes God's constant preserving providence; and counts nothing in preserving providence small. No sin is to be accounted little, because it is against a great God; and no good providence is little, because it is exercised towards sinful men.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 19.<sup>k</sup> Psal. xxxvii. 3.<sup>l</sup> Gen. xxviii. 21.<sup>m</sup> Psal. cxvi. 8, 9.<sup>n</sup> Job, vii. 20.



A true owner of his dependance upon God, looks upon God's preserving mercy towards him through this double multiplying glass,—his own brittleness, and his own unworthiness; that God should preserve a thing so brittle, and so ill-deserving.

And thus I have considered the end of this offering,—viz. to be an acknowledgment to God of their dependance on him for their lives, and to implore his care and good providence towards them for their preservation. Now, in the second place, we come to consider,

II. The quantity of this sum: “half a shekel.”—What! but half a shekel for the best man in Israel? Why, the price of a servant was thirty whole shekels: and is the rate of the best freeman in Israel, but at a poor half-shekel? “If an ox push a man-servant or maid-servant, that they die,” the owner of the ox must give to their master, thirty shekels of silver, for the price or value of his servant he had lost<sup>o</sup>. And so our Saviour was sold at the price of a servant,—viz. thirty pieces of silver: a poor price to value him at; and you may think it not a rich price to value the best man of Israel, but at half a shekel,—when the poorest servant was valued at thirty whole ones.

Do you not observe the difference? That was the price of a servant betwixt man and man; this, the rate of men betwixt man and God. A servant might well be worth thirty shekels to his master, as being able to be profitable to him. But what can poor sinful man be profitable to God? Even an ox or an ass may be of a good handsome price betwixt man and man, because they may be profitable to man; but what can man be profitable to God? It is Eliphaz's question<sup>p</sup>, “Can a man be profitable to God, as a wise man may be profitable to himself?” You find oft, in Scripture, mention of the ‘children of Belial:’ the word signifies ‘unprofitable,’ but it means an idol; a god that cannot profit, and whom it is no profit to serve. Our God is not such; he is not an unprofitable master; it is profit to serve him; but, when we have done all we can, we have cause to say, “we are unprofitable.”

If we should be valued by God, according as we can be profitable to God (as we value our cattle according as they are profitable to us), at what rate should he set us? At a

<sup>o</sup> Exod. xxi. 32.

<sup>p</sup> Job, xxii. 2.



grain of dust, and a drachm of ashes,—at a puff of vapour, and a blast of wind,—at the rate of a moth, and the price of a worm,—at the value of nothing, and lighter than vanity; this is the proper weight we carry upon the balance, if we be weighed, as we are indeed in ourselves. Therefore, never complain, that God rates men so low as but half a shekel: wonder, rather, that he rates or values them so high; nay, that he sets any value upon them at all. For, “Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest value or think of him; and the Son of man, that thou shouldest make account of him?—Man is like to vanity, his days are like to a shadow, that departeth away<sup>a</sup>;” and yet, upon such a one, God setteth his eye,—upon such a one, he setteth some value. He was to offer God half a shekel for his soul. God lays not this tax to rate men according to their worth,—for that was nothing; nor to lay any heavy burden upon them,—for the tax was small; but it was to instruct them, ‘that God requires some tribute of men for their preservation.’ Men must not think to live on free-cost, and that God maintains their lives for nothing; but rather let them know, that he looks for some pay and tribute from them. The apostle tells us, that “what was written aforetime, was written for our learning;” and so, what was written for them, is written for us too. Only, the punctual rate and payment of half a shekel, lies not upon us, as it did upon them; but what is intimated by the payment of this rate, is intimated to us, as well as it was to them. The intimation was, ‘that they, men, owe God a debt and payment for the preservation of their lives, and he expects it from them.’ This payment, of half a shekel money, ceased, when the Jews ceased to be a nation; but the equity and intimation, that it read and carried with it, ceased not, but takes hold upon us, as it did on them.

The ceremonial appointments of the Jewish nation, did not only prescribe the external action, but also enjoined the signified duty too. They were enjoined to offer sacrifice. The outward action was killing a beast, and offering him upon the altar for an atonement for their sins. The thing signified, was the sacrificing of Christ, the great oblation for the sins of men. The duty intimated was, that they should look to the death of Christ, and, by that, believe to obtain the forgiveness of their sin, and not barely by their

<sup>a</sup> Psal. cxliv. 3, 4.



sacrifice. So that they were bound, both to the moral duty, to believe in the death of Christ, for the atonement of sin; and they were to offer sacrifice too, thereby to signify his death, in which they believed:—and the like might be said of the other ceremonious burdens, that were laid upon them; but we will only take instance in that before us.

They were enjoined to offer this half-shekel yearly to God, for the preservation of their lives. The thing signified was, that their lives depended upon God, and to him they must look for their preservation. The moral duty intimated and required, was,—that they were bound to pay a tribute of obedience to God, for his preserving them. For it was not money, that God looked after; but, “to obey is better than sacrifice.” The ceremonial part of their work was laid down long ago; but the moral duty that it signified, lays still upon all of us, and all men in the world.

By the way, let me tell you this out of the Roman histories: that, when Vespasian had conquered and destroyed Jerusalem, he commanded that the Jews should pay this half-shekel, that they used to pay to God for their lives, to his idol, Jupiter Capitolinus, at Rome. A sad thing, to pay that, that was to be paid to God, their preserver,—to the devil, the destroyer; for his god, Jupiter Capitolinus, was no better than a devil. And I wish, in the parallel, it be not too true with too many,—that, what they owe to God for their lives and preservations, they pay to the devil.

Well, the first thing taught in the payment was, that ‘we should learn and observe, that God doth not preserve and take care of men’s lives for nought; but that he expects some tribute and payment for it.’—And, truly, that he may, in all reason in the world, if we will but compare his case and men’s together. Every shepherd, every shepherd’s boy, must be paid for keeping another man’s flock; and must the great Shepherd have no pay for keeping and leading Israel like a flock? Nay, Satan himself sees it all the reason in the world, though he speak it with a venomous intent,—that, if God have hedged Job round about, as he had done, and taken such care of him, he pay him with fear and careful walking before him. “Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side?” There-



fore, it is no wonder, if he fear thee; it is all the reason in the world, he should.

There is no care in the world taken of one person by another, but it is repaid with some fair repayment or other: even the care of parents to their children, which, you will say, nature itself binds them to, yet they expect to be paid with their obedience. That challenge of God is but most just<sup>s</sup>, “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if, then, I be a father, where is mine honour? and, if I be a master, where is my fear?” It is the very title and profession of God, that he is the preserver, keeper, Saviour of men:—and no pay to him from men for all this? “O thou *preserver* of men<sup>t</sup>!” The word signifies ‘observer’ too. As God looks to men, so he looks after men, to see what they do, and how they demean themselves to him, that looks to them. So Samuel hints to Saul, and Nathan to David; “I have done thus and thus to you, kept you, dignified, promoted, prospered you,—and is this the requital you make to me?”—Need I to tell you, that God is called the “Watchman of Israel, that never slumbereth nor sleepeth,” but continually takes care of them. But the apostle<sup>u</sup> goes farther, and tells you, that he is not only the preserver of Israel, but even of all men; “We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.” Some, from the word ‘Saviour,’ would conclude universal grace and redemption; but the word means, as in the Book of Judges, ‘a preserver or deliverer;’ and so God is to all, especially those that believe. Though he preserve not unbelievers in the very same manner and degree that he doth believers, yet he preserveth them, and looks for requital from them for their preservation.

Now that, in all equity, some payment is due to God in this case, let us a little consider of these things.

First, The preciousness of life: that very thing may argue, that it is not a small debt we owe to him that preserves it. It hath the proper name of ‘precious<sup>v</sup>.’ “For, by means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the *precious* life.” And do you not think, that Solomon speaks very true, when he calls life ‘precious?’ and do you not think, that even the father of lies speaks true, when he said, “Skin for skin, and all that a man

<sup>s</sup> Mal. i. 6.<sup>t</sup> Job, vii. 20.<sup>u</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 10.<sup>v</sup> Prov. vi. 26.



hath, will he give for his life?" What will any man take for his life to pass it away? What jewels, what rubies, what riches, will buy his life from him? No, he accounts it too precious to part with his life for money or money's worth. And this doth enhance the preciousness of life,—that it is not only so excellent a being in itself, but, without it, all things are nothing to him, that hath lost it. Bring a dead man bags of gold and heaps of silver; fill his coffin up with pearls and jewels; strew his grave with diamonds and rubies;—there is no hearing, no minding, no affecting, when his jewel, that was more worth than all these,—his life,—is gone.

Now, who is the preserver of this dear jewel, while we carry it about us? Is it we ourselves? The Psalmist tells us, that "it is he that made us, and not we ourselves<sup>w</sup>." And reason may tell us, that it is he, that preserves us, and not we ourselves. For can we any more preserve our lives of ourselves, than we can give life to ourselves? When a deseperated anger is ready to swallow us up,—if God withdraw his preserving providence, can man bring his life out of danger? In Scripture-phrase, for a man 'to put his life in his own hand<sup>x</sup>,' is to venture it to danger, where there is no safety: but in the hands of God it is secure, while he will take charge of it. Feeling is that passage of Daniel to Belshazzar<sup>y</sup>, "The God, in whose hand is thy breath." Canst thou take it into thine own hand, and there hold it? The Jews tell a story of the Angel of death sent to take away the soul of Moses, but Moses withstood him, and he could not do it; but when God saw his time to take it, no withstanding. The 'angel of death,' in their meaning, is the 'devil;' and the apostle speaks to their opinion<sup>z</sup>, "That, through death, he might destroy him, that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Now, wherein lies the reason, why Satan takes not away our lives, when he pleaseth? Is it in ourselves? Would not he, think you, carry away all men bodily to his den, if it were in his power? And is it our power, that doth restrain him? Think of those poor possessed ones in the gospel, whom the devil hurried so up and down at his pleasure. Is it our own power, that doth restrain him, that he useth not us so? When we read or hear such stories, have we not cause, if we had hearts, to look up at a higher power than our own, that we are not, as they were, in his

<sup>w</sup> Psal. c.<sup>x</sup> Judg. xii. 3.<sup>y</sup> Dan. v. 23.<sup>z</sup> Heb. ii. 14.



power? And was it his courtesy, that he spared their lives, —when God had given him liberty to use their bodies, as he did? Or was it not, that God restrained him? You may guess it by Job's case, betwixt whose life and Satan's malice against him God had put this bar,—“Only take not away his life.”

But when God himself comes, by death, resolvedly to take away any man's life, whose power is it in to hinder? When he is resolved to tear body and soul asunder, who shall say, “What doest thou?” When he will preserve life no longer, who can make it out, and preserve it himself? The Lord giveth life and the Lord taketh it away; in his hand only, is the disposal of our life and being.

Secondly, God shows himself tender of our lives:—doth not only preserve them, but shows that he is tender of them, and willing to preserve them. God is the fountain of being, and giver of life; and it is agreeable to his nature to maintain the being of men, and their lives; but it is not so agreeable to him to destroy them. It is said of him, that “he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men<sup>a</sup>,” and he saith of himself, that “he hath no pleasure in the death of the sinner<sup>b</sup>,” and no wonder, for it is somewhat besides his nature: q. d. for it is his nature to give being, and not to destroy it.

Now, that God is tender of the lives of men, and preserves them willingly and tenderly,—you have it evidenced in the mouth of three or four witnesses, that the truth of it may be established.

1. He is tender of the lives of very birds and beasts; and, therefore, forbids all cruelty towards them. Balaam, for cruelty towards his poor ass, is reprov'd both by the angel and the ass herself. And how does God forbid to kill a beast and her young on the same day, to take a bird and her young at the same time,—but if he take the young, to let the dam go; forbids to seethe a kid in his dam's milk; and, in a word, it is a token the Holy Ghost gives of a good man, that he is “merciful to his very beast.”

2. Is it not an evidence, that God is tender of men's lives, when he hath made so severe a law against murder, or taking them away? And what strange discoveries hath he made of murders and murderers, that he that hath taken away a man's

<sup>a</sup> Lam. iii. 33.

<sup>b</sup> Ezek. xviii. 23.



life, may not go unpunished? So tender is God of the life of man, that as man hedgeth in a choice tree or plant, that he is tender of,—so hath God man's life, with such a fiery law, as well as he doth also with his providence.

3. Doth not God tender the life of man, when he would have all men to spin out their lives to life eternal, and showed them a way how to do it, if they would but take his way? God had rather thy life should reach heaven and eternity there, than to drop into hell in the end, and be drowned in eternal death. And this is one thing amongst others, that doth highly enhance the preciousness of man's life, that it may be translated to eternity.

4. And lastly, If you yet need any evidence and demonstration of God's tenderness to men's lives, and willingness to preserve them, and unwillingness to destroy them,—look upon yourselves, as you are alive here this day. And whence is it, that you are so? Can you give any other proper reason, than this, Because God is tender of your lives, and is not willing to destroy them? Hath he not power enough to have cut them off and destroyed them long ago? And have we not given him cause enough to have destroyed them, over and over? Whence is it, then, that we are all here this day? God hath spared our lives, preserved our lives, tenderly preserved them; or our souls had long ago dwelt in silence.

And are we not in debt to God for this care and tendering of us? Is there nothing to be paid him, not one half-shekel, for all our preservation? Doth not all the reason in the world dictate, that, when we live by him, we should live, as he would have us? that when he spares and preserves our lives, we should lead and spend our lives according to his rule?

And this is all that he requires from us,—he looks not for money nor money's worth; not for a shekel nor half a shekel; not for an offering of a lamb or bullock for the ransom of our lives; but all that he requires is,—‘that we pay God obedience and service; live *to* God, as we live *by* him.’

III. Having considered the ‘quality’ of this payment, viz. to be a tribute of acknowledgment of their dependance upon God for their lives, and the preservation of them: and the ‘quantity’ of it, or the sum itself, half a shekel, to imply that they lived not on free-cost, but under a rent and homage to God;—we come now, in the third place, to discourse of



the 'equality' of the payment: "The rich shall give no more, and the poor shall give no less;" but every one exactly alike:—which may seem something strange, when there was such a diversity of persons. That was a miracle about the measuring of manna, that every one should have the same proportion, when they came to measure,—and yet such a difference of proportion, when they gathered. And this is something wonderful in the proportioning, that all should pay so exactly alike, when there was such vast difference betwixt persons and conditions. Some worth thousands, some worth nothing,—some on high on a bench of state, and some as low embracing a dunghill: and yet all pay alike. What! are we become levellers? all-hail fellows, and no distinction? the rich no better than the poor, and the high become yoke-fellow with the base? This taught them and may teach us, that which so oft is inculcated in Scripture,—

That "God is no respecter of persons" in regard of any one's outward condition<sup>c</sup>; "There is no respect of persons with God:"—"Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him<sup>d</sup>." But Peter there seems to destroy what he had built up; for he had said, "God is no respecter of persons," and yet, immediately after, he saith, 'God accepteth some.'—But the meaning of him, and of other places that speak the same, is, that God respects no men upon any external accounts; he respects not the rich man a whit the more for his being rich, nor any poor man the less for his being poor. He is not like them<sup>e</sup>, who, if they see "a man with a gold ring or gay clothing," O! then I pray, sir, "come up hither and sit here;" but if a poor man, "in mean garb and habit," then, "Go, thou, and stand or sit there at my footstool." The apostle, at ver. 4, gives them their right title, though, at first sight, not easy to understand; "Are ye not become judges of evil thoughts?" His meaning is not, that 'they judged or passed sentence upon evil thoughts; but that they were evil-thoughted judges, as a judge of unrighteousness is an unrighteous judge:—when God hath so commanded, that men should judge impartially without respect of persons, are not you evil-thoughted judges, when you so prize the rich, and despise the poor, merely because of their outside, or external condition?

<sup>c</sup> Rom. ii. 11.<sup>d</sup> Acts, x. 34, 35.<sup>e</sup> James, ii. 2.



God cannot do so : he cannot gaze with admiration upon a gallant suit and clothings, glittering lace and diamonds : he cannot ever the more regard a man, that hath regarded money and gotten a great deal of it together. Nothing that the world can contribute to a person, can make God to respect him a straw the more. Take but that one instance of Herod Agrippa<sup>f</sup> :—when he was in all his pomp and gallantry, and as richly dressed as money and hands could make him ; the sun shining upon his cloth of silver, and cloth of gold raiment, that dazzled the spectators' eyes, as Josephus tells the story ; the foolish people, they admire him, applaud, adore him ; and he speaks and looks more like a god than a man. In that very instant, God showed how little he regards any man for his outside, be it never so gorgeous ; for he strikes him with the lousy disease ; and he is eaten up with lice, and dies.

God looks upon men, as they come into the world, and as they go out, ' naked,' and not through any deckage that the world hath put on them. And, accordingly (Exod. xxxiii. 5), when God would call the people to account for their making the golden calf, and look upon them in their proper condition, he bids them " put off their ornaments from them." Now, God looking upon men in this their naked condition, as men, he sees this equality in all men in the world :—

First, That they are all alike his creatures ; and, therefore, he may, in this respect, value them all alike. The rich did no more create himself than the poor, and the high no more than the low ; but they are all alike his creation : " He made us, and not we ourselves<sup>g</sup>." And there is no man to be excepted from the word *us*, but he made one as well as another. That is a caveat to the rich and high, which God speaketh to Job<sup>h</sup>, " Behold now Behemoth, which I made with thee ; he eateth grass like an ox." What! dost thou compare with me any thing, that eateth grass ?—Yes, I made him as well as thee ; and thou madest thyself no more than he did ; and you are both my creatures, as well the one as the other :—thou as well as he.—So is the rich his creature as well as the poor : " The rich and the poor meet together ; the Lord is the maker of them both<sup>i</sup>." They meet together ; and, it may be, the rich spits at the poor in scorn and despising : yet the Lord made them both ; and, in that regard, there is

<sup>f</sup> Acts, xii.<sup>g</sup> Psal. c.<sup>h</sup> Chap. xl. 15.<sup>i</sup> Prov. xxii. 2.



no difference betwixt them. And thereupon, the same Solomon saith<sup>k</sup>, "He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker." As if he cast in the teeth of God, for that he made such a pitiful creature, that were fit for nothing, but to be oppressed and trodden upon. The oppressor thinks himself another kind of creature; whereas they were cast in one and the same mould.

Doth the rich and high and great think, that he is less beholding to God for his creating, than the poor and the mean? Or else, does he think, that God laid out more pains and power and love in the creation of him, than he did on the other? Did God use more art or skill, or more care and endeavour, in making him, than in making the poorest creature, that goes from door to door? Although the Holy Ghost hath made some difference in relating the history of the creation of other things, and of man, and hath brought in the whole Trinity consulting for the making of man, "Come, let us make man;" yet, in the making of several men, we must not look for any diversity. And whatsoever men will gather out of Psal. xxxiii. 15, "He fashioneth their hearts alike:"—as some from thence would gather the pre-existence of souls,—some, the equality of souls;—certainly, this may be, that God made no difference of his working, when he made all.

Secondly, As all the men of the world are of this parity and equality in regard of the Creator's work that made them,—so also in regard of the matter or mettle, of which they are made. Did God choose any finer clay for the making of one than for another? "Dust thou art," was the character of the first Adam; and does any of his posterity differ from that character? Did God look out for finer clay to make a great rich man of, than he did to make a poor? "The vessel that he made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it<sup>l</sup>." The potter hath a pot on the wheel; and it hits not to the fashion he aimed at; so that he works it up to vessel of another fashion, but the same clay still:—so, however there may be some variety in the frame of the vessel made, some diversity in the composition of men, some fair, some foul, some black, some white, some a smooth Jacob, some a rough Esau,—yet the clay,

<sup>k</sup> Prov. xiv. 31.

<sup>l</sup> Jer. xviii. 4.



that these diversified vessels are made of, is but one and the same.

You remember that, Isaiah xlv. 9; “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth.” The meaning of the latter clause, ‘the potsherds of the earth,’ is, ‘men to strive with men is something like equal match; and if they will needs strive, let them strive one with another; but ‘woe to him that striveth with his Maker!’ You see the title given to all on earth; they are but ‘earthen potsherds,’ but as bits of a broken pitcher. While the pitcher was whole, it was but an earthen pitcher; while Adam was in innocency, he was but a vessel of clay, though a vessel of honour: but his fall hath broke the pitcher all to pieces; and all the men of the world are but as sherds of a broken pitcher. It may be, one piece of the potsherd may be bigger than the others are; yet that is but a potsherd still, and of the very same mettle with the other. It may be, one piece is finely painted and coloured, which the other is not; yet it is but a potsherd for all its painting,—and but of the very same clay with the other bits, for all its bravery.

Thirdly, And as all are of the same dust in their original, and no difference,—so, is there any difference in the dust, to which they shall return? Shall great and rich less turn to dust, than mean and poor? Or shall they turn to nobler dust than the other? Shall a more noble or gentile worm seize upon a great man in the grave, than does upon a mean? or a more gallant corruption devour the rich man than doth the poor? There “the kings and counsellors of the earth” lie down together<sup>m</sup>; and there the poor and rich have the same lodging, and the servant hath the same bed with his master. And do they not all go to the same, the very same dust? And doth not the same, the very same corruption seize and consume them? The Lord that made us, “knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust<sup>n</sup>:” dust in our beginning,—dust at our latter end,—and one and the same dust, both in our beginning and end, and no difference.

And, therefore, how can he, in this regard, but value all at one rate? and when the poor and rich come to pay tribute for the preservation of this dust, our bodies,—that all should contribute alike; ‘the rich no more, and the poor no less?’

<sup>m</sup> Job, iii. 14.

<sup>n</sup> Psal. ciii. 14.



But are all men's souls alike too, that God should rate them all alike too? Take the word in the text in the proper sense, "you shall make an atonement for your souls;" are all souls looked upon by God alike too? It was an old question in the schools, '*An animæ sint æquales?*' 'Whether all souls are equal?'—And our inquiry adds one question more, 'Whether God weigh all souls alike?' And the question lies not so much in this, 'Whether God prize not a holy soul above a sinful,' as, 'whether every soul be of the same value as a soul?' And the reason of the question, is from the vast difference of the tempers of men, in which the acting and nature of the soul appears. And it were wonder, if some of the Jews did not cavil at this law, upon this very point. They took upon them to be exceeding wise; and abundance of them gave themselves that title; and must they be valued with fools and idiots?

I am not curious to discuss this question copiously. It might be a very proper answer to this question, such as is John xxi. 22: where Peter's inquisitiveness receives an answer, "What is that to thee?" So, when any are curious to know, whether all souls are alike, whether an unlearned soul is like a learned, a heathen like a Christian, an idiot like a solid man,—I may say, "What is that to thee?" Search, and try, and examine, and take care of thine own soul. Yet to speak something to this case.

First, Distinguish between the activity of the soul, and the capacity of it: what it does, and what it is able to do. It is a maxim, "*A posse ad esse non valet consequentia.*" From what a man can do, it will be but a weak consequence to conclude, that, therefore, he will do it. The leper, to our Saviour, understood logic better, and concludes not, that he would make him clean, because he could do it; but he begs, that he would do it, seeing that he could; "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." It is a good consequence to say, 'a man does thus, therefore he can do it:' but a wild one to say, 'therefore he can do no otherwise.' So, as to the judging of the true quality of the soul, if you would take measure of a soul aright, you must not barely look at its present acting, but at its capacity, and what in its full largeness and latitude it is able to act: not take measure of a reasonable soul, as it is in its childhood, but when it is in its full growth and capacity.



Secondly, Now the acting of a soul, in its full capacity, cannot be, while it is in the body. It cannot see God face to face, nor the devil, as he is a spirit; which it may do, when out of the body. It cannot converse with things in eternity, which it cannot but do, when out of the body, either blessed or miserable. It cannot, here, but be deceived many a time over; there it cannot possibly be deceived: and so I might speak in other particulars.

So that the proper judging of the nature of the soul and its capacity, is to take it, as God did Israel at Sinai (when he would know what to do with them), stripped of their ornaments; so must the soul be stripped out of the body; loosed of all that that pinioned, hampered, or any ways straitened, it. And what think you of the souls of infants, of fools, and idiots, then and there? Can we think their souls are infants, fools, and idiots, in the other world? For,

Thirdly, Though the soul be of a vast capacity, while in the body,—yet the acting of it even there, is many and many a time hindered and curbed, that it cannot reach to its acting in its full capacity, which it could reach to even here, if there were not some hinderance. Take, instead of more, an instance or two of what may seem nearest to folly and idiotism, and are not. A man is drunk: does his soul then act according to the proper capacity that it were able to act in, if he were sober? There is a man learned, and a hundred that have no learning at all. Now, the reason why those unlearned ones are not learned as well as he, is not, because their souls were not of capacity to have received learning, but because they had not the means of education in learning, that he had. So the acting of the soul, according to its capacity, is oftentime hindered, by the want of apt organs or instruments in the body. Do you not see before your eyes, by experience, a man or woman moped,—their understanding clean spoiled by a sad stroke of the palsy or apoplexy, that the person is not the same, that he was before? And yet his soul is the very same; but the right acting of it spoiled by the spoiling of the organs or instruments, by which it should act. The brain is so shattered by the stroke of a convulsion, that it cannot be so serviceable to the soul, as it hath been. And so those naturals and idiots we are speaking of,—their souls are like to other souls,—spiritual substances, as well as others,—immaterial and intellectual, as well as others; but



there is some defect of the organ or instrument in the body, something that the intellect should use, is failing or bruised.

Now, not to wade farther into this question, these two things are undeniable concerning all souls in the world:—

1. That they are all of the workmanship of God, and no souls but come out of his hand. “Behold! all souls are mine<sup>o</sup>.”—Zedekiah sware to Jeremiah, “As the Lord liveth, who made us this soul<sup>p</sup>.” And he spake very true; though Jeremiah was as good, and he as bad, yet God made both their souls alike, Jeremiah’s as well as Zedekiah’s, ‘et contra.’ In that dispute about pre-existence of souls, some hold pre-existence,—and some, not: yet both hold, that the soul comes immediately from the hand of God:—and sure, God sends no maimed soul out of his hand.

2. That all souls have equally need of God’s support. There is a double support of the soul: either that God preserve and keep it in the body, for the life of the body,—or preserve and keep it in grace, for the good of the soul. This distinction the words of the apostle mean<sup>q</sup>, “He is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe:”—‘he preserves the lives of all that live; but especially he preserves the souls of those, that believe in him.’

So that, if the question be, ‘Doth God preserve all alike? doth his providence set itself to keep all alike? If not, Why should all be bound by this tax in the text, to pay for their preservation alike?’—The answer is easy, though it may seem strange when given; ‘He doth, and he doth not:’ but I may facilitate it by this distinction:—

First, He preserves all alike; that is, all that are preserved, have their preservation alike from him, and alike owe their preservation to him. So that none is able to say, ‘I owe my preservation to God less than thou dost: thou art much beholden to him for the preservation of thy life, but I am not so much: thou hast had more need of his preservation than I have had.’

Secondly, He preserves not all alike,—viz. in this sense,—that he takes care of the preservation of the souls of some in another manner, than he doth of others. He preserves the persons even of ungodly men, and keeps their souls in them; but he preserveth the souls of the godly in well-being, as well as their bodies in life. Hence those frequent expres-

<sup>o</sup> Ezek. xviii. 4.

<sup>p</sup> Jer. xxxviii. 16.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 10.



sions; "He keepeth the souls of his saints:"—"The Lord careth for my soul:"—"Commit the keeping of your souls to him<sup>r</sup>." And that one instead of more<sup>s</sup>, "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, yea, he shall keep thy soul;" he shall preserve thee from all evil to thy body: but, which is the preservation indeed, he shall take care of the welfare of thy soul.

I shall not need to insist to show the great difference of these two kinds of preservation: even all the wicked of the world are under the former, God's preservation of their lives; but the children of God are under both, the preservation of their bodies and souls also.

There is nothing that differenceth men in the sight of God, but good or evil actions. And the Judge of all the world, that cannot but do right, judgeth and rewardeth every one according to their works. As the apostle hints<sup>t</sup>, "Who will render to all men according to their works," and "for there is no respect of persons with God." He respects not, whether men be high or low, rich or poor, but deals with all according to their works. Hence that in Eccles. ix. 1. Outward accoutrements distinguish men in the world, but not with God: and poverty or riches, high place or contempt, are not signs of his favour or disfavour; but he looks on men, according to their doings.

I. Well: by God's thus equally valuing all, we are taught, That we should undervalue none. God hath set a stint, that we should not be proud nor despise any. For,

1. What are we better than another? 'Yes; I have more estate than another; I go braver; such a one, a poor pitiful fellow, not to be compared with me.' Aye, but he is God's workmanship as well as thou. Ye are twins so like, that ye cannot be known asunder. Yea, God himself knows no difference betwixt you. Hast thou an immortal soul? so hath he.—Hath he a mortal body? so hast thou.—Hast thou a soul, that is made in the image of God? so he.—Hath he a body, that is but dust and ashes? so hast thou.—What is added by the world, as we say, of wealth, and honour, and clothes, are such things, as will once be clean stripped off: and where is the difference then?

2. And who hath made the difference as to their outward condition? Answer the apostle's question, "What hast thou,

<sup>r</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 19.

<sup>s</sup> Psal. cxxi. 7.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. ii. 6—8.



that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why boastest thou thyself, as if thou hadst not received it?" When we see a person in worse state than ourselves, we commonly look upon ourselves as somebody; whereas, we should look up to him, that hath made the difference. And do we see a poor miserable creature, and look upon him with scorn? And do we not rather think, 'Might not God have made me as poor and miserable, as this poor wretch? He might have clothed me with rags, as well as this poor beggar. He might have made me as silly as this poor idiot. Down, great heart, and proud, and learn to ascribe all the comforts and benefits thou hast above any other poor soul, where it is due, and to ascribe nothing to thyself, but guilt and sinfulness.'—

II. If we desire to be esteemed, what is it to be esteemed by God? He hath set all at one rate, as men are in the lump; if we desire to be of a better value, it is wisdom to labour to be so in his eyes, that so values all. To esteem ourselves, is but a folly; to labour to have others esteem us, is but folly, unless it be in an estimation, that God will say 'Amen' to it also. Remember that of the apostle, "It is not he, whom man approveth, but whom God approveth." If we would be thought to be beautiful, let it shine in the image of God; if rarely decked, let it be with his ornaments; if to be learned, remember, that "he that honoureth me, I will honour."



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

JUDGES, XI. 39.

*And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow, which he had vowed.*

THE apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xi, reckoning up that noble catalogue of men, famous for faith and great actions under the law,—at ver. 32, mentions three, that may seem to be something questionable: and those are Gideon, and Samson, and Jephthah: men, indeed, that had done great acts, but that, in the close, came off with some foul blot. Gideon<sup>b</sup> “made an ephod, and put it in his own city Ophrah, and all Israel went thither a whoring after it.” Samson pulled down the house upon his own head, and so became ‘felo-de-se,’ or guilty of his own death. And was not Jephthah guilty of the death of his own daughter?

That is the question, we are now to look into. I have lately shown you the heathen sacrificing men and women to their gods, and heathenish Israelites sacrificing their children unto Moloch; let us now consider, whether Jephthah, a man of a better name and religion, fell not under the like miscarriage, in sacrificing of his daughter. The text tells us, “He did to her according to his vow, which he had vowed.” And the resolution of the question lies in the resolution of another verse, what his vow was? That you have at ver. 30, 31: “And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt, without fail, deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,—then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I come in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.” A rash vow, as appears by his repenting and rending his garments, ver. 35: a rash vow, that he could not come off with either breaking or performing it, but with sin. If he performed it not,—he sinned in making a vow, that he might

<sup>a</sup> English folio edition, vol. 2. p. 1215.

<sup>b</sup> Judg. viii. 27.



not perform: if he performed it, he sinned in performing a vow, that he might not make. So that, as the king of Syria once said, "Whether they come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they come for war, take them alive;"—so is Jephthah taken deadlily, whether he hold his vow or break it: he is caught under a rash and sinful vow, as a man that hath a wolf by the ears, that, whether he hold him, or let him go, he is in danger. If he break his vow, how can he answer his taking such an engagement upon him, as not to keep? If he hold it, how can he answer making a vow of so nice a performance?

The words of his vow are read one way by some interpreters, and another way by others: and there is one letter in the Hebrew text breeds this diversity,—viz. ו, that may signify either *and*, or *or*. And, accordingly, some read it, "Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace, shall surely be the Lord's; *and* I will offer it up for a burnt-offering:" and others read it, "*or* I will offer it up;" as meaning, 'If it be fit to be offered in sacrifice, I will offer it in sacrifice; but if it be not fit, yet it shall be the Lord's.'—So some of your Bibles give intimation of this diversity of reading, having one in the text, and the other in the margin. But in the text you see it is, "*And* I will offer it up." And so it is in the Greek, Vulgar, Italian, French; and so rendered, also, from the eastern languages.

Now, what could meet him out of the doors of his house, that was fit for sacrifice? Nothing to be expected to come out thence, but men, women, and dogs; and any of these, yea, the very dogs, might come out to meet him, and welcome home their master, but none of these were fit to be sacrificed. Nay, a dog is not fit to be dedicated to God any way. For though there is a supposal, Lev. xxvii. 11, and a permission of dedicating and sanctifying an unclean beast to the Lord, that was not fit to be sacrificed, and that it might be redeemed for a sum of money to be given to the priest; yet a dog is particularly excepted in that prohibition, Deut. xxiii. 18; "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, nor the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord, for any vow." And do ye think, Jephthah had his dog in his thoughts, when he made his vow? That were more ridiculous to imagine. And if any were so simple as to imagine it, it might be answered,



‘He could not think of his dog; because he knew, a dog could not be so consecrated to God.’

Could he, then, think of a bullock, ram, lamb, kid, or goat? These were things, indeed, that were fit to sacrifice; but a double objection lies against thinking, that he thought of any of these. The one is, because he speaks of “coming out of the doors of his house;” which no one will understand but of his dwelling-house. And it were ridiculous to think of ox, or ram, or lamb, or goat, coming out of his dwelling-house. And the other is, that he speaks of ‘coming to meet him;’ which expression means to welcome him home, as his daughter went out to meet him to welcome him home. Now, it can little be imagined, that he thought of any bullock, or lamb, or goat, coming out to meet him under any such notion.

Therefore, these things considered, it is past all doubting, that, when he saith, “Whatsoever cometh out to meet me,” he meaneth some man or woman, or child of his family. And child he had none, but only this one daughter, ver. 33. And it is very like, he little thought of her, when he made his vow, but some of his men or maids. And whereas our English hath rendered it favourably, because of the great question that is raised upon his vow, “*Whatsoever* cometh out,” the Hebrew original will most properly bear it, “*He* that cometh forth:” and so the Greek, Latin, and other translations bear it.

For he was now upon an extraordinary and very great design,—viz. to go and fight with the potent army of the Ammonites, his forces not being very great. And, therefore, it is very likely, that he makes an extraordinary vow to his extraordinary design he was upon. Now, this had been but an ordinary and common business to vow,—‘If I return from the children of Ammon with victory, I will offer the first lamb, or ram, or bullock, I meet withal at my coming to mine own house.’ Had this been any great vow for the imploring his prospering in the great undertaking, he went about? But to dedicate a man or a woman to God spoke high, and something like the greatness of the design.

And how he served his daughter, when she came first to meet him,—is the great question and dispute. Some, tender of Jephthah’s credit, and reckoning it not fit to lay more hard things on him than the story will well bear,—therefore, to



make the best of it, hold, that he did dedicate to God, not sacrifice, his daughter; he devoted her to God in keeping her a recluse and nun, and never to be married; though he had no other child, and so his family was like to fall. But, on the contrary,

First, Nunship and vow of virginity, by the Papists, indeed, is pretended to be a great piece of devoting and consecrating the party to God: but that it is so, never was, nor ever will be, proved, but only pretended, and with a loud noise cried up; as they did in the great hubbub at Ephesus, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" when none could understand, or see any reason for, such a hubbub and outcry. Certainly, among the Jewish nation, they were so far from accounting the vow of virginity a piece of devotion and religion, that they accounted it a reproach for a woman to be childless; nay, a reproach for a woman not to be married. You remember that saying of Elisabeth<sup>c</sup>, that had thitherto been barren, "Thus the Lord hath dealt with me in the days, when he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men:"—a great reproach for a woman to live and die childless; but God hath taken away that reproach from me, in giving me a child.

And a greater reproach it was for a woman not to be married. And hence is that in Psal. lxxviii. 63, "Their young men were slain by the sword, and their maidens were not *praised*;"—for so it is in the original, which our English hath rendered, "were not *given in marriage*:"—for it was a dispraise for a woman not to be married. Nay the Jews, in their traditional law (by which they were led too much), did not only account it a shame not to be married, but a sin, and a breach of God's command. For those words, Gen. i. 28, "Be fruitful and multiply," they account not only a blessing, but a command; and reckon it the first command of the six hundred and thirteen commands, that are in the law. And to this opinion of theirs it is that the apostle reflects, 1 Cor. vii. 25; where, treating concerning virginity and marriage, he saith, "Now, concerning virgins, I have no command from the Lord; but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."

Secondly, To this may be added, that persons, dedicated to the Lord, were not, therefore, bound to perpetual virginity.

<sup>c</sup> Luke, i. 25.



For we read of some that were so dedicated, that yet, for all that, married. As Samson, a dedicate Nazarite, yet took him a wife; and that of the daughters of the Philistines: and Samuel, dedicated by his parents; and yet afterward married, and had children.

So that whereas the Papists account vowed virginity so great a piece of religion and devotion, and thereupon their nuns and their priests must not marry;—they will hardly find the least warrant for it either in the Old Testament, or the New. It is merely an invention of their own, as, indeed, is most of their religion, and clearly without any warrant or allowance of God. It is very unlikely, therefore, that vowed virginity should be ever so much in fashion or request in the Jewish nation, as for them to account it so great a piece of religion; or that Jephthah should account that a noble performance of his vow, and account it a great vow to devote his daughter to perpetual virginity.

But if that were not the intent and action of his vow, what did he to his daughter? Did he really sacrifice her, and offer her up for a burnt-offering? That was less religion, and less in custom in the nation, to sacrifice a person. And can it be imagined, that Jephthah, whom the apostle reckons among the faithful, should do such a thing?

I answer, Very true. But may we not think him, though faithful, yet, for the present, that he might fall under ignorance, and a blind zeal?—It is, indeed, something hard and strange to think so uncharitably of such a one as he was:—but,

The fathers of old were almost unanimously of the mind, that he really sacrificed his daughter. They that have purposely handled this question, will tell you, that Tertullian, Athanasius, Nazianzen, Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Austin, Theodoret, and others, were of that mind. Besides Jewish writers that might be produced; I will name but two,—the Chaldee paraphrast and Josephus: and divers modern Christians are of the same mind.

But still the objection will return. What! such a man as Jephthah murder his own daughter, and offer her in sacrifice? Would the apostle ever have reckoned him among the noble army of faithful ones, had he done such a thing as this?

I answer, first, That comes but a little short of this that



is said of Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 5. "Solomon went after Ash-toreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites." Let the Jews plaster the case the best they can, and say, That he himself did not worship these gods, but only suffered his wives to worship them; and that he did not build those high places for Chemosh and Molech, ver. 7, but only suffered his wives to build them.—Yet, how deeply was he guilty in suffering such a thing! But the text tells you, that he himself went after these gods; which, in Scripture-language, signifies commonly the real committing idolatry with such gods. And do but remember what the service of Molech was, and offering children to him; and observe that Solomon went after Milcom, or Molech, and built high places to Molech: and how little short that does come of Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter! And yet I doubt not of Solomon's salvation; for I doubt not of his repentance.

Secondly, That it was now too common in Israel to worship Molech. Now, observe, Judges x. 6, "The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtoreth, and the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, the children of Ammon, and the Philistines; and forsook the Lord, and served him not." An evil case were the people in, when they were generally so idolatrous, and so variously idolatrous. Now, among others, observe, that they served the god of the Ammonites, which was Molech: so that it was no strange thing with them to offer such barbarous and bloody sacrifices, as their own children: that you may guess, that the corruption of the times might suggest to Jephthah the fancy of offering some such sacrifice of man or woman to God; the rather, since,

Thirdly, That he was now going to fight against the children of Ammon, who offered their children to their god Molech. And it seems, he thought he should speed better against Ammon, who offered their children to Molech, if he vowed and offered such another sacrifice to God.

We observed before, that nothing could come out of the doors of his house to meet him, that could be fit to be sacrificed by any warrant or allowance of God; not his dog, nor his servant: and, therefore, that his words cannot but be conjunctive, "Whatsoever meets me, shall be the Lord's, *and* I will offer it up:" and that the strictness of his vow,



as he conceived it, did put him on to the strictness of his performance.

It had been the part of the priest, and of the great council of the kingdom, to have prevented such a fact as this. The priests' lips should have preserved knowledge, they should have taught him better: and the great council, that should have preserved righteousness and good order, should have taken care against such an action. But the nation, it seems, was so overgrown with ignorance and idolatry, and particularly with the serving of the idol Molech, that such a thing as this proved no regret at all to them.

The poor girl, his daughter, begged two months' respite, that she might go upon the mountains and bewail her virginity. She might have hoped, that, in all that time, some rescue might have come to her; either the council of the priests, or the authority of the state, interposing with her father. But all was so out of tune and overgrown with idolatry, as may be seen in that text I cited before, chap. x, —that Jephthah, who was too much led away with the evil example of the times, is not at all restrained, but rather encouraged, by the negligence of those, that should have directed and ordered better.

And to one, that doth more narrowly search into the Bible, I may recommend this observation to his examination: —That, in the time of the Judges, the high-priesthood was lost out of the line of the sons of Eleazar into the line of the sons of Ithamar, from one family of Aaron's to another. And whether it might not be, because the then high-priest did not better demean himself about this very matter, let him seriously consider.

I am unwilling to charge Jephthah too heavily, nor lay such a fact to his charge; but I have given you the opinion of the greatest men of note that have written, laying it to his charge,—and I have given you some reasons, that might induce and move them to it. But I dare say, none of them that have so held, but they thought that he had repentance proportionable to this miscarriage. And so, no doubt, had Gideon, in setting up his ephod in his city, which caused all Israel to go a whoring after it. And so repented Solomon after his building of altars to Molech; and so did Manasseh after his offering of his sons to Molech. And such repentance of Jephthah, I doubt not but the apostle had an eye



to, when he reckons him among the faithful, and those that 'died in the faith.'

I shall fix only upon one observation, which fairly offers itself unto us, take we the story one way or other; that he sacrificed his daughter, or only devoted her to perpetual virginity,—viz. What care, prudence, and piety, men had need to use about making of vows.

Do you not think, that Jephthah would have borne witness to this, when he found himself caught in the trap of his vow, and his daughter fallen into it, which he little meant? Could he not wish, he had had more care in the making of his vow, when the keeping of it must prove so bitter? Did not rashness go before his care, when he vowed, and considered not what might be the issue? Did not his eagerness go before his prudence, when he vowed somebody, but he knew not whom? And did not his zeal go before his piety, when he vows but violence to some or other, on whomsoever it lights,—viz. either to sacrifice them, or otherwise to devote them, though against their will? When he rends his garment upon his daughter's meeting him, and cries out that she was one that troubled him; it might have been answered him, as Elias did Ahab, "No, I am not he that troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house."—No, Jephthah; it is not thy daughter that troubles thee, but it is thy vow that troubles thee, that was made with no more consideration. If more care, prudence, and piety, had been there, thy present grief and perplexity had not been here.

I name these three most deservedly, and upon very good reason. For as a vow is a bond, or cord, whereby a man binds himself,—so these are as a threefold cord, twisted to make up such a bond. These are so essential to the constitution of a right and lawful vow, that let any of them be absent, there will be a sad maim there. Let care be absent, the vow will be rash; let prudence be absent, it will be impertinent; and let piety be absent, it will be wicked and ungodly.

A vow is a bond, that binds the soul; and so the Scripture calls it, Num. xxx. 3, "If a woman shall vow a vow to bind her soul with a bond." And a man had need to be prudent and careful, how he binds his soul. It is a tender piece; take heed the bond sit right, lest it gall and fret it. Take



heed the bond be not such, as to bind hand and foot, and to cast into utter darkness.. What else, think you, was those forty men's vow, that bound themselves, by an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed Paul? Had not these men fettered their own souls for utter darkness by the bond of their vow?

Now, because we have before us a remarkable case of a vow, let us a little consider of that subject, and what a man does or should do, when he makes a vow.

And, first, let us begin with this question,—Whether a man be bound to make vows or no? Is a man bound to lay such a bond upon his soul? It is enjoined, Psal. lxxvi. 11, “Vow and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that are round about him, bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.” Now, doth this bind a man to make vows,—or only bind him to pay them, if he have made them? And if it bind to make vows, doth it bind under the gospel, as well as under the law, where most of their vows were vowing of sacrifices? And so that latter clause of the words cited give intimation, “Bring presents,” &c. And so some construe that, Eccles. v. 4. 6; “If thou hast made a vow, defer not to pay it: suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say before the angel, It was an error.” Where, by *angel* they understand the *priest*, that should receive the sacrifice:—“Thou vowedst; say not before him, thou wast mistaken.”—Now, for the resolution of this question, many things are to be spoken,—and, especially, the nature of a just vow considered.

To the constitution, then, of a lawful vow, these two things are requisite and essential:—

- I. That it be for a religious end.
- II. That it have a religious warrant.—And both these must be concurrent; else, a vow cannot be lawful.

A vow is a matter of religion, by which a man ties himself in a bond to God; and religiousness must be that, that must give it life and warrant. The Scripture calls a vow, ‘a bond, laid by the person, that vows, upon the soul,’ in the place above cited. And, therefore, the thing refers unto the soul, and so is something betwixt the soul and God. To bind the soul in reference to any thing of the world, is both contrary to the interest of the soul, and not agreeable to the proper nature of a vow. I will instance in one as likely,



colourable, and common, as may be,—viz. a vow never to be surety, nor bound for any man. This may be a good resolution possibly, but hardly possibly a good vow. For a ‘resolution’ and a ‘vow,’ may admit of a clear distinction. And a man may resolve wisely, justly, and warrantably, such and such things concerning his estate and affairs in the world: whereas, such resolutions may not be fit to be turned into vows. Thou mayest do wisely, in resolving never to be bound for any man; or to resolve, ‘I will spend but thus much weekly, monthly, or yearly, in housekeeping.’—But thou mayest not do wisely or warrantably to bind thyself to these things by a vow: to bind thy soul under a bond,—and, consequently, under a curse, if thou break thy bond,—for such worldly things as these: to call in God to witness, and to engage to him about such earthly concerns as these.

The phrase of the apostle is observable, 1 Cor. vii. 36, where he is speaking of virginity, which the Papists would bring under a vow:—“If any man thinketh he behaveth himself unseemly towards his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require,—let him do what he will. Nevertheless, he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep his virgin,—he doth well.” You find not here, either vow of virginity, or oath not to marry, but only a steady resolution. ‘Standing steadfast in his heart,’ and ‘decreeing in his heart:’—not ‘laying any bond of vow or oath upon his soul.’

You find not, in Scripture, any vow of any good man, but it was aimed at a religious end, and in tendency to the service of God, and not to any worldly interest or respect; I mean, when considerately made. Such a one was Jacob’s<sup>d</sup>; such another vow was that of David<sup>e</sup>: and, without all controversy, Paul’s vow<sup>f</sup> had a higher aim and end than any earth’y or worldly concernment. Nay, even men of no religion yet accounted, that a vow aimed at a religious end. Even Absalom<sup>g</sup>, when he made his vow in Geshur, pretends to such an end. And the mariners, in the ship with Jonah, sacrificed sacrifices, and vowed vows<sup>h</sup>; and their sacrifices and vows, without question, looked both the same way, and

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xxviii. 20.<sup>e</sup> Psal. cxxxii. 2.<sup>f</sup> Acts, xviii. 18.<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. xv. 8.<sup>h</sup> Jonah, i. 16.



aimed at the same end,—religious worship. And that vow, that the Israelites made<sup>i</sup>, “Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt deliver and give this people into mine hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities;”—though it may seem somewhat hard and unreasonable, yet they aimed at a religious end in it,—viz. obedience to God’s command, that had enjoined them to destroy the Canaanites, and not to spare them.

These vows mentioned, you see, were ‘conditional;’ and the persons engaged in them, desired in them, as it were, to bind God to do something for them, and they engaged to do something for God. But there were, and are, vows ‘absolute,’ and without any such condition, whereby men, out of conscience of their duty, bound or bind themselves to as strict obedience and service of God, as they can; such is that of David<sup>j</sup>, “I have sworn, and will perform it, to keep thy righteous judgments.” And such was the general end of the vow of the Nazarites, to set themselves peculiarly to some service of God<sup>k</sup>, “When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite to separate themselves unto the Lord.” Nazaritism was properly a vow of humiliation, that a man would chastise himself, and deny himself his ordinary delight of ‘liberty,’ and neatness.

I say of ‘liberty,’—for he bound himself to a strict avoiding of every thing, that might defile him. And this required not a little care and circumspection, and denied him that liberty of walking at freedom, that he might have had. It is said of Elisabeth, the mother of the Baptist, that, when she conceived with child, “she hid herself five months.” And why? because she carried a Nazarite in her womb: lest she should be any prejudice to the Nazarite she bore, by lighting upon any thing unclean to defile her. She thus reclused herself from all company, that she might be sure to be far from all defilement. And the Nazarite denied himself the liberty of eating or meddling with any thing, that came of the vine,—wine, grapes, raisins, or any thing the vine bred.

And, I say, he denied himself of the common ‘neatness’ and comeliness, that both he might have had, and every body else had. And that was, in that he let his hair grow, and did not cut it as others did. For however long hair

<sup>i</sup> Num. xxi. 2.<sup>j</sup> Psal. cxix. 106.<sup>k</sup> Num. vi. 2.



among us be accounted a bravery, and men be grown effeminate like women; yet, among the Jewish nation, it was accounted clean contrary, a sluttish, nastiness, and deformity. And they are mightily mistaken, that think that Absalom wore his hair so long, because he was proud of it: he wore it so long, because he had vowed Nazaritism, and by way of humiliation, and denied himself that neatness, that he used before. For that which the apostle saith<sup>1</sup>, “Doth not nature itself teach, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame to him?”—the Jewish nation consented to with all their hearts. And, therefore, they looked upon Nazarites, with their long hair, as men under humiliation,—and that wore it so, to take shame unto themselves before God and men. And so they took up their vow, as whereby to tie themselves to a more strict way of religiousness and humiliation.

Men generally think there is some weight, and awe, and terror, in a vow; and even the profanest of men stand in fear of breaking even of foolish and rash vows: Prov. vii. 14; the whore there speaks, “This day have I paid my vows.” I have known, where a wicked fellow, having made a vow, that he would never go in at his neighbour’s door, durst not, for his vow’s-sake, go in at the door; but could be content to creep in at the window. And another, that, having made a vow, he would not go into such an alehouse of so long a time, durst not, for his vow’s-sake, go into it; but could be content to be carried in. Now, however these wretches dallied with God, and trifled with their vows, and their own souls,—yet they showed, that there is some awe of a vow, even upon an ungodly heart, and that that stands over them, as with a whip and scourge. A good heart discerns the awe of it much more: and many a good man hath made vows of careful walking; that he might have his vow his monitor, and keep him in awe to it: hath stuck, as it were, this rod always by him, to mind him to have a care, and to whip him if he failed.

Now, is every man bound to make such vows as these; with David, to make a vow ‘to take heed to his ways,’—and to take an oath, and swear, ‘that he will keep God’s commandments?’ The bond lies upon us from God, to walk holily and carefully: have we need, or are we bound, to add to the bond, and to lay a vow upon ourselves so to do?

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 14.



For answer to this, I shall recommend to you two passages of Solomon, and one of David.

First, That in Prov. xx. 25: "It is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy, and, after vows, to make inquiry." For a man to vow, and to devour what he had vowed, and not pay it; and then to make inquiry concerning his vow, whether he vowed well or ill or no? this is a snare.—This should have been done, before he made his vow, and not after. It is best for a man to consider before he vows, whether he do well in making his vow; and whether he shall be able to perform it, when he hath made it. The great cause of breaking vows, or repenting of what a man hath vowed, is want of consideration beforehand, what he goes about.

A vow, even a holy vow, is a thing of deliberation, and not to be undertaken rashly; but as, in our Saviour's parable, "He that builds a tower, had need to sit down and cast, whether he be able to finish it, when he hath begun it,"—so to consider, whether he be able to perform his vow, when he hath made it? For as a vow is to be of a thing lawful and weighty; so it is to be of a thing possible. He that vows that, which is not reasonably in his power to perform, casts not himself only into a bond, but into a snare. Such is the nun's vow of virginity, and the priest's vow among the Papists never to marry. It is not more a vow, than a snare, because they cannot say or think it is absolutely in their power to perform it. And the contrary hath been proved, and is, daily, among them, by doleful experience.

A good heart, out of a good intention, may be willing to bind himself under a vow, to walk as carefully before God as possible: but let him well consider beforehand, how he can keep his vow. For consider that considerable place of the same Solomon:—

Secondly, Eccles. v. 5: "It is better that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow, and not pay." Whether Solomon spake there only of vowing a sacrifice, or, generally, of any holy vow, his saying will hold true,—that it is better not to vow, than to vow and not perform.

Such holy vows as we speak of,—a man's vowing all care possible in his holy walking,—proceed either from conscientiousness of his duty, or consciousness of his frailty. A man, out of conscientiousness and a holy zeal to his duty, binds himself, by a vow, to his utmost performance of it; that his



vow may be a continual spur and monitor to him to keep up to it. Another, out of consciousness of his readiness to fail, or to be sleepy in his duty, or to be ready to falter from it,—binds himself by a vow, to be as a bell to keep him awake to it, and to be a check to his faltering. These men have done well in making their vows, if they keep them; but if they keep them not, it had been far better not to have vowed, than not to pay. God undoubtedly requires, that they should perform, when they have vowed: but we cannot say, that he so strictly requires, that they should vow. Which makes me remember that of Peter to Ananias<sup>m</sup>, “While it remained, was it not thine own? and when it was sold, was it not in thine own power?”—And thou mightest have chosen, whether thou wouldest have vowed and consecrated it to God or no: but since thou hast taken on thee to devote it to him, the Lord requires, that thou shouldest perform, and not falter with him. As a man may choose whether he will enter into bonds or no; but when he is entered into them, he must look to pay them.

Thirdly, A hint about this matter let us take from Psal. lvi. 12; “Thy vows, O Lord, are upon me.” He speaks oft of his *own* vows being upon him,—here, of the *Lord’s*. Either ‘thy vows,’ that is, ‘made to thee:’ so sacrifice was the Lord’s sacrifice: or, ‘thy vows,’ that is, ‘that thou hast laid upon me;’ the bonds wherein thou hast bound me.

A vow in baptism is laid on us by God; so on Israel by circumcision: and God, even as soon as we come into the world, seizes upon us, and would tie us to him: swaddles us in the bond of the covenant, as soon as we come into the swaddles, that he might bring us up for his. And, as it is said of Jonathan,—that he made David swear, and enter into oath with him, “because he loved him as his own soul;”—so God makes us to swear, and to enter into vow to him, because he is very tender and loving to our souls.

It is the great dispute, Whether an infant, in baptism, be capable to have a vow and bond laid upon him? And, thereupon, some deny infant-baptism; because he is not able to stipulate, or take any bond upon him; for he knows not, what a bond or a vow means. “Man is born as a wild ass’s colt,” saith Job: and a wild ass’s colt little understands any religious concernment; and an infant, when he is baptized, as little.

<sup>m</sup> Acts, v. 4.



Very true; and yet Anabaptists cannot say,—a wild ass's colt is as fit to have a bond laid upon him, as an infant. An infant hath a soul, and owes duty to God,—a wild ass's colt wants both; which moves God to deal after another manner with an infant, than with an ass's colt. An infant hath sin and guilt upon it, and so hath not an ass's colt; and, upon this account, also, God deals in another manner with an infant, than an ass's colt. An infant is born a child of wrath,—as the apostle saith, all are, Ephes. ii. 3: God surprises it as soon as born, and makes it enter into bonds with him, that it may come out of the state of wrath. But, farther, in answer to this objection, consider these three things:—

I. The child, indeed, then understands not what it does, and cannot stipulate again, in words to God, as God, by his word, doth to it; but the very equity of the things, that God lays upon it, doth tie the child in the bond, and wrap him in the obligation, as justly and forcibly, as if the child had said 'Amen' to every particular. For it is the equity of God's commands, that lays the obligation of obedience upon men, and not their own consent. For, as the prophet speaks, "whether they hear, or whether they forbear," yet the obligation lies upon them; because it is so meet, fit, and just, that they should do what God commands them. By this equity, God lays his obligations upon us in our baptismal bond. And though, as infants, we cannot understand, nor consent to it, yet, by the justness of the things enjoined, we are enwrapped in it: and God's vows are upon us; and the more, because he lays them on for our good,—viz. to deliver us from the wrath, under which we are born. The bond is, 'to forsake the devil and his works, to believe in God, and to serve him.' And can there be any thing more just and equal? And though we are not then able to give consent to the bond and obligation,—and though none others should undertake for us,—yet, doth not the very equity of the thing required oblige us?

II. God, by the continual preaching of his word, minds us of the obligation. We know not what we did, nor what is laid upon us: but he all along now teaches us to know it, and daily is refreshing to us the sight and sense of our bond; and, as it were, anew tying it on. It is considerable, that the commands are called, 'the covenant,'—and the two tables of the ten commandments, 'the tables of the covenant.' And



whose covenant? Both God's and man's. God's, because God hath indented with man upon such conditions: and man's, especially, because the condition of the obligation is his. And God is continually warning him, that it is his obligation. There is a voice behind him, continually telling him this is his duty.

III. As God, in baptism, lays his obligation upon us, when we knew not of it, and in preaching of the word is continually urging of us to know it: so, in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, he would have us willingly and knowingly to take it upon us. They know not what the Lord's supper means, that own not an obligation in it. As in that sacrament there is taught living by Christ, so there is challenged a living to him. The sacrament reads, that Christ died for men; and that very thing reads, that men are not to live to themselves. There is a 'benefit,' partaking of Christ to live by him; but there is an 'obligation' also, a bond, to live to him. For, as the covenant is obligatory, so this seal or administration of the covenant is so too. Now he, that, in receiving the sacrament, owns not such an obligation, and takes not that bond upon him, understands not what he does: and if his heart do not engage to live to Christ, as much as he desires to live by Christ, he seeks to serve his own turn, and not Christ's,



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

1 KINGS, XIII. 24.

*And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him:  
and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it;  
the lion also stood by the carcass.*

IN this chapter, there is mention of one or two miracles, and there is intimation of two wonders. The miracles are,—the altar at Beth-el rending, and Jeroboam's head withered, and, at the prophet's prayer, restored again. The wonders are, that so brave a prophet should be deceived as he was,—should be destroyed, as he was; and it is wondrous, that the lion, that destroyed him, should not also destroy his ass. I know you know the story. He was sent to cry out against the idolatrous altar at Beth-el, and so he did. He is commanded not to eat or drink in that place; and he did not, though the king kindly invited him home. But, by the deceiving of another prophet, he is brought back again, when he was got out of town; he eats and drinks in the town, contrary to what he was commanded; and, when he goes out again, a lion meets him by the way, and kills him.

There is no difficulty at all in the words of the story,—it is very easy to be understood; but there is mysteriousness in the providential disposal of God, that appears in the story.

I. The good prophet to be so destroyed. How would this encourage Jeroboam and the idolaters at Beth-el, in their idolatry! “Oh, this man was but a false prophet; all he said against our golden calf and altar was but a scare-babe; for, otherwise, he would never have come to such an end.” And how might they boast, that their new god, at Beth-el, had met with him, for his sauciness against him!

II. And how might this discourage other prophets to go on the message of the Lord, when this poor man sped no better, than to be killed with a lion!

III. That one prophet should so deceive another, as the old prophet at Beth-el deceived this poor man to his undo-

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1223.



ing, by telling a lie, and making him transgress the command of God. How might this disadvantage the function and credit of the prophets ; for who will believe them, when they lie one to another, and deceive one another ?

IV. A poor man to be cheated and deceived into a transgression, having that fair excuse, ‘ The old prophet did deceive me, and I did it : ’—and yet to be so dreadfully punished for it, as that it must cost him his life ; and, in such a manner too, as to be killed by a lion.

V. That this poor man should suffer so severely for violating but one command of God, ‘ Eat not ; ’ and Jeroboam should escape so secure, that had violated the greatest command in the two tables, “ Thou shalt have none other Gods but me ; ” and, “ Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image.”

This poor man is induced to sin by another, and that by ignorance, and he speeds so sore ; and Jeroboam induceth all Israel to sin, and that wilfully, and yet he is jovial, and feels and fears no dangers.

VI. It is something obscure, what this old prophet of Beth-el was, a true prophet or a false, a good or a bad. If a true prophet, why did he lie to him ? If a false, how could he foretell him of his end ? He was a true prophet, and this poor good man knew, that he was a true prophet ; and the lie that he told, was not with intention of any hurt to him, but an officious lie to persuade him to go home with him. He desired to have the company of this good man, and to give him some entertainment at his house. He sees no arguments will persuade him ; therefore, he minteth that lie, that an angel had spoken to him, and commanded him to bring him back ; and so is the poor man deceived and undone.

In this story of his fatal end, we may first consider a little upon the instrument of his death, a lion ; and then concerning his death and fate itself.

1. “ A lion met him and slew him.” How much praise have you in Scripture of the land of Canaan ; that it was the ‘ pleasant land,’ ‘ the glory of all lands<sup>a</sup> ; ’ the land ‘ flowing with milk and honey,’—in multitudes of places ; a land, upon which the eye of the Lord was from one end of the year to the other ; a land of vineyards and olive-yards, &c. And yet how sadly and dangerously was that land infested with

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xx, 15.



ravenous, cruel, wild beasts! Where, almost, might a man be safe? Samson, walking by the vineyard of Timnah, a lion sets upon him, and had served him, as this lion served this poor man, if he had not met with his match, and Samson had been too hard for him. And a lion and a bear raven upon David's flock, and had robbed him of a lamb and a kid, had he not also been too strong for them. But every one was not so:—as Jacob doubted concerning Joseph, “Certainly, an evil beast hath devoured him;” undoubtedly, my son Joseph is so dead. What a sad havoc was it, when, about this very place, Beth-el,—where the lion destroys this prophet,—two she-bears, at one clap, tear in pieces two-and-forty children!

And that passage is very remarkable, in the story concerning the battle betwixt David's men and Absalom's, in the wood of Ephraim<sup>b</sup>; “The battle was scattered over the face of all the country; and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.”—‘The wood devoured!’ How? Why, the lions, and bears, and ravenous beasts, that were in the wood, they picked the men up as they were scattered up and down, and made a greater slaughter than the sword.

It is something obscure, that which is said, Deut. vii. 22; “The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.” And, among other things, that might be inquired upon it, this might be one,—why God did not drive out the wild beasts out of the land, as well as he drove the Canaanites out? And the answer might be various.

I. That he might show, that there is no absolute quiet, and happiness, and security, to be expected here. Canaan, the choice country upon earth, the only paradise on this side heaven; and yet, even Canaan is not without its inconvenience and molestation. There were gardens, and orchards, and vineyards, and olive-yards; but, it may be, a lion or bear lurking in them: there was all pleasure and plenty, but there were wild and ravenous beasts ranging abroad, that one could never say, ‘I will walk without danger.’

So would God teach them, that it was not their earthly Canaan, that they were to look after; but they must look

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. xviii. 8.



higher, if they would look for rest, and quiet, and secure habitation. A man sat under his vine, or under his fig-tree; it may be, on a sudden, a wild beast rusheth upon him, and he escapes narrowly, if he escape devouring. A man is binding sheaves in the field,—or a woman gleaning,—and, suddenly, a lion or bear is at their back, that there is but a span betwixt them and death, if there proved so much. This was a very evincing lesson,—that absolute quiet and safety was not to be had there, for all the bravery of the land; but that they must look for another land of promise, if they would be perfectly safe, quiet, and free from danger.

II. These wild and ravenous beasts in the land, were, as it were, a rod or scourge, ready in the hand of God, to whip transgressors withal, as he saw cause, as he did this poor transgressor in the text. And he reckons them among the plagues and punishments, that he used to avenge himself by upon the rebellious. Ezek. xiv. 15; “If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it so, that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the noisome beasts.” And, ver. 21; “How much more, when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence.” You have some emblem of a man persecuted with noisome beasts, Amos v. 19; a man flees from a lion, and a bear meets him; or he gets home, and leans his head upon the wall, and a serpent bites him. And you have a real example of it, 2 Kings xvii. 25; “They feared not the Lord; therefore, the Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them.” And God doth give this as a promise of a singular blessing: Levit. xxvi. 6; “I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land.”

And how can we choose, but remember the mercy of God to this our land, in this particular: that no such ravenous, dangerous beasts, do range in our nation; if men themselves would not be wolves, and bears, and lions, one to another. A man may take his journey, and never fear being set upon by any wild beast. No father, sending out his son, needs to fear any evil beast devouring him; and no mother hath cause to weep with the women of Beth-el, for their children, torn in pieces by he or she-bears. God hath so blessed our land, that such dangers are least feared of us. We see no



lions or bears, unless it be under grates and bars. It is to be bemoaned with tears, that we are such lions, and bears, and brute beasts, one to another.

II. And thus much of the instrumental cause of this poor prophet's death, 'a lion.'—The efficient cause, was his transgressing a command of God.

Upon which, if any heart be moved any whit to murmur, or dispute against the severity of God in this case, let me calm it much after the manner, that Joab's messenger must calm David: "If the king's anger arise, and he seem vexed and displeased (saith Joab to the messenger), then say thou to him, Thy servant Uriah is dead also." If thy heart, sinner, arise against God's dealing here, and thou think it very severe that this poor man must die thus, let me say this to calm thee,—But thou art not dead, who art as great a transgressor as he: why he died, a reason may be given; but canst thou, or all the world, give a reason, why thou art alive?

Let this, then, be the first application of this story: Every one to consider with themselves, that they, after all their sinning, are yet alive,—when this poor man, but for one sin, came to so fatal a death. Let me use our Saviour's style and question a little, "Think you, that these Galileans were sinners above all others? or that those eighteen, on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were sinners above all others?" Thinkest thou, this man was a greater sinner than thou art, that he came so to his end, and to so fatal an end? Nay, speak, heart, from the very bottom and in sincerity,—thinkest thou not, that this man was a hundred-fold, a thousand-fold, less sinner than thou art? And yet he was thus taken away, and thou yet alive: he a good man, a holy man, a holy prophet, and yet he so fearfully cut off for violating but one command, and deceived into that miscarriage too. And how many commands hast thou broke, knowingly, wittingly, wilfully; and how far, how many degrees, art thou short of the holiness of this man,—and yet alive? Hast thou any heart to complain of God's severity against this poor man? look home, and see what cause thou hast to stand amazed at his patience towards thee. He, for breaking one command:—how many ones hast thou broken? Nay, if God had reckoned to cut thee off at the hundredth, the thousandth, breach of his commands, had not the account been up a hundred, a thousand, times over? And yet thou art here.



David questions, "Lord, what is man?" Take the philosopher's answer, 'Homo mirum,' 'Man is a wonder.' And so he is, a wonder in his creation: and so David himself owns<sup>m</sup>; "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." A wonder in his preservation, when there are so many concurrents, that might dash him all to pieces; and yet he lives.

"I will draw nigh (saith Moses), and see this great sight, that is before me; the bush burning, and yet is not consumed."—And a great sight, indeed, that fire, that devours all things that it lays hold on, should burn so vehemently in the bush, and yet the bush nothing at all impaired. Draw nigh, and turn thine eyes to such a kind of sight in thine own preservation. So many things concurring, that might cause thy consuming,—dust and ashes,—frailty,—mortality,—sinfulness,—provoking of God,—and yet not consumed. What account can we give of our preservation?

First, Let us look upon this man, and then let us look upon ourselves: as the man that fell among thieves, travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, lay by the way-side half dead;—so this poor man is fallen into the paws of the lion, and lieth by the way-side wholly dead. And is this nothing to us, that we should, like the priest and Levite, thus slightly pass by him? The man was a good and holy man, and I make no question but he was saved, though he came to such a fatal end.

"Saved (will you say), when he came to such an end, for transgressing God's command! He died in his sin certainly, and can we think that he was saved?"

1. Consider what follows immediately in his story, ver. 28: "The lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass." God, that so severely punished him to the death, yet showed a miracle for him, when he was dead:—which sheweth, that God had not cast away all care of him, though he had so sorely punished him. And it was a very fair sign that God had not suffered the great roaring lion to devour his soul, in that he suffered not this lion to devour his carcass. It is David's saying, "Dost thou show wonders for the dead?" Yes; in one sense, he did here. And can we think, that God would show such a miracle for a cast-away; and for one whose soul was now in hell, would he show such a wonder for his body?

<sup>m</sup> Psal. cxxxix.



2. It is true, indeed, that he died for transgressing of God's command; but had he not repented of that transgression? It is observable what is said of the prophet, that had brought him back again, ver. 21, that he "cried to the man of God," that he had brought back. When God had revealed to him, what wrong he had done in lying to the poor prophet, and making him transgress God's command, and what a sad fate should befall him for his transgression, he 'cried out' with sadness and affection, and told him how it should be with him. And can we think, that the good man, having his sin so laid before him, and his dreadful punishment, was not deeply touched with the sense of his sin, and with all earnestness sought to God for pardon?

We may not judge of him by ourselves; we little take to heart what we have misdane, and what is denounced by God against our sinning. A holy prophet was of better temper and of a tenderer heart, and deeply sorrowed for his transgression, when he was convinced of it, and sought for pardon and obtained it. So that though he died for his sin, yet he died not in it.—The case of David may give some illustration to this case. When Nathan told him home of his sin about Uriah and his wife, he instantly repents, is pardoned, that he falls not under condemnation for it: but he is not quit from temporal judgment and punishment for it. "The sword shall never depart from thine house;" and, "the child shall die." So this man is told of his fault by the other prophet; he repents, is pardoned, that he falls not under condemnation; but he is not acquitted from a temporal punishment, and that a severe one, that cost him his life.

We may here take notice of divers things:—

First, Of the wild opinions of Antinomians, that say, 'A believer is not punished for his sins, whatsoever befalls him.'—But the reason they give, spoils what it would prove. "For Christ (say they) hath borne his punishment:"—which if it be true, yet it is punishment as to satisfaction, not to castigation. For who among us ever said, that a believer was punished for the satisfaction of his sin? God punisheth him upon other accounts. David's sin was pardoned, and satisfied for by Christ, when Nathan tells him, "The Lord hath done away thy sin;" but the punishment followed, viz. the sword, which was not to depart from his house. And the reason of his punishment was, because he had "given occa-



sion to the enemy to blaspheme:" therefore God, to vindicate his own honour, and the honour of religion, punished him, that men might see that God was righteous, and hated iniquity, wheresoever he saw it.

Secondly, Let us remember here that strange passage, Amos iii. 2; "You have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities."—"You have I known, owned, chosen, of all the families of the earth:"—what then? One would think he should infer, "Therefore, I will not punish you;" but he says the contrary, "Therefore, I will." The children of God are punished, many and many a time, as to temporal punishments, when wicked and ungodly men escape. This poor holy man falls under so sad a fate, while Jeroboam, the wickedest wretch upon earth, "that made all Israel to sin," eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and no hurt comes to him. Some will think, that speaks strangely,—others will think, it speaks as they would have it, in Hos. iv. 14, "I will not punish your daughters, when they commit whoredom,—nor your spouses, when they commit adultery." This is as they would have it; for then they may whore, and drab, and adulterate, and fear no colours. But that is a sad diapason, Jer. v. 31; "What will you do in the end thereof?" And that, 2 Pet. ii. 9; "God knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished."

That of the apostle may state the case on both hands, 1 Cor. xi. 32; "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." When wicked men are not judged, it is a sore sign that they are to be condemned with the world. When God neither judgeth them, nor they judge themselves, there will be a judgment to come will pay for all. For a man to go on uncontrolled in his sinning, is the very preface of destruction; and, especially, if his own conscience do not now and then control him: for that is sometime the whip, wherewith God doth chasten. God saith of some persons, "I will not punish, I will not chasten him, when he sins against me,—but let Ephraim alone; he is joined to idols, so let him be."—Let the scribes and Pharisees alone; they are blind leaders of the blind; and let them be so still.—Wouldest thou change thy afflicted state with one of these? Wouldest thou part with thy smarting conscience for such seared, stupid, past-



feeling souls, and such as God will have nothing to do withal? God hath thee in hand, and is chastening thee for thy good; these he hath utterly cast off all care of, and will have nothing to do with.

But what kind of chastening was this to this poor man, that it cost him his life, and cut him off, whereas God useth to do good to his people by his chastisements? “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them, that be exercised thereby<sup>b</sup>.” But what fruit was there with this man, when the very chastening was his death? A Jew will tell you, that his death did expiate for his sin, and was a means to atone for it; and a Papist will almost be of the same opinion. But God’s intention in the dispensing of this providence looked another way,—viz. to vindicate his own honour, and to show to the world how tender he is of his own commands. And that is the third thing we may read in this great and dreadful severity; viz.

Thirdly, That God will not abide to have his commands dallied and trifled withal: that we are not to account that common, which he hath sanctified. He is “a jealous God, that will not hold him guiltless” that breaks his commandments:—Hos. viii. 12, “I have written unto them the great things of my law.” The things of his law and commands are *great* things; and what one of them is little, or so to be dealt withal? Though they are one less than another, if compared among themselves, yet none of them are to be reputed little by us. One is less than another in regard of their matter, yet all alike of reverence and dread to us in regard of their Author. A small business, you would think, for this man, being hungry and weary, to eat and refresh himself in Beth-el, and that being invited by another prophet, and told too by him, that an angel had commanded him to invite him:—but because he had a command from God to the contrary, you see how dear it cost him.

A small thing, you would think, for Saul to save Agag alive, and to bring away some of the Amalekites’ cattle, especially when it was to sacrifice to God;—yet how severely doth he smart for it, because, in it, he transgressed God’s command to the contrary. How might the poor man have pleaded, as he went to be stoned for gathering sticks on the

<sup>b</sup> Heb. xii. 11.



sabbath-day; "Alas! this was not so great a crime, to gather a few sticks, especially when I wanted them for the necessity and benefit of my family."—But, friend, there is an express command and word of God against it; the word of the Lord is sharper than a two-edged sword.

That title of the law is regardable and dreadful, in Deut. xxxiii. 2; "From his right hand went a fiery law for them;" or, as it is in the original, "the fire of a law for them." A law not only given in fire, as it was in mount Sinai, but a law that itself is fire, to consume and destroy those that transgress it. As our God is a consuming fire, so his law and commandment is a consuming fire: "I have hewed them by the prophets: I have slain them by the words of my mouth<sup>c</sup>." His word is a weapon of slaughter to them that disobey and rebel against it. And whereas it is said, "Man shall live by the word of God," if he obey it,—he shall die by the word of God, if he transgress it. The commandments of God are edged tools; if slightly meddled withal, they cut to the quick; and prove as that stone,—if they fall upon one, they will grind him to powder. Not one command, but the transgression binds over to eternal condemnation: and, therefore, it speaks less to say, it binds over to temporal punishment.

Fourthly, and lastly, This man's repentance so little a time before his death, as we spake of before, and obtaining pardon, some may chance take hold of, and use it as an argument for putting off repentance till his death-bed, and latter end. For his carnal heart may thus argue: "If this prophet repented of his transgression but an hour or two before his death, and obtained pardon; I hope I may do so too, and obtain pardon as well as he."—Yes; it is like thou mayest, if thou be like him: he was a holy, a good, a righteous man, all his time; only he was now fallen into one transgression a little before his death, and repents of it, and is pardoned. But thou,—who thinkest of putting off repentance till thy last time,—I doubt, art in another case. He had no sin unrepented of, but only this, that he had just now committed; and that he repented of, and is pardoned. Thou wilt have all thy sins to repent of at thy latter end; and that changeth the case not a little. He walked in the ways of repentance and holiness all his life,—thou thinkest not to do so till thy death.

<sup>c</sup> Hos. vi. 5.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

ACTS, vii. 53.

*Who have received the law by the disposition of angels,  
and have not kept it.*

I CONCLUDED, last day, with mention, how God would have none of his commandments to be dallied and trifled withal,—from that dreadful example of the poor prophet, that broke God's commandment in eating and drinking in Beth-el, being cheated into that transgression by the lie of another prophet: and yet he escaped not, though his ignorance might something excuse him; but a lion met him by the way, and slew him.

I have chosen these words in the prosecution of that subject: to consider a little upon God's giving his commands or laws, and man's too common violating them, and misdemeanour against them. 'The law given by the disposition of angels,'—but men 'not keeping it.'

The words are the words of Stephen, pleading for his life, and answering that charge, that his accusers laid against him,—of blasphemy against Moses; for that he had said, 'That the rites of Moses should be changed:—and against the temple; for that he said, 'That holy place and city should be destroyed.' How he answers particularly to this accusation, I shall not trouble you with observing: in the conclusion of his speech, he comes to speak home to the persons, both of them that accused him, and of them that sat in judgment upon him. He first calls them all "stiff-necked and uncircumcised, both in heart and ears." Then he chargeth them all with all resistance of the Holy Ghost, speaking by the mouth of the prophets: chargeth their fathers with persecuting and slaying the prophets,—and them with the murder of the great Prophet, Christ: and concludes his speech with the words before us, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

In the words is sweet and sour, life and death, light

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2, p. 1228.



and darkness. “Ye received the law by the disposition of angels:” this is like Ezekiel’s book, sweet in the mouth: “but ye have not kept it;” that is in the belly as bitter as gall. In the former clause, you may see Israel before mount Sinai in a happy condition, receiving the law; in the latter, you may see them a little from it, undoing themselves by making a golden calf. And to that particular we might very well apply the words: “There were thousands of angels in the mount, when ye received the law; but ye so little kept it, that, within forty days, ye broke the two first commandments of it,—viz. ‘Thou shalt have none other gods before me;’ and, ‘Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image.’”

But it may be questioned,—whether he, saying, ‘They received the law by the disposition of angels,’ means the angels that were attending God, when he gave the law at Sinai.—True, the Scriptures mention frequently the presence of angels with God, when he gave the law. Two only may serve instead of more: Deut. xxxiii. 2, “He came with ten thousands of his holy ones; at his right hand was a fiery law for them.”—Psal. lxviii. 17, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, the holy place.” But what did the angels, that were there? You read not, nor hear, of a word that they spake; but it was the Lord, that spake these words, and said, “I am the Lord thy God.”

For the understanding, therefore, of the martyr’s meaning: First, We may mention a wild conception of the Jews, that say, ‘That all they, that heard the law uttered by God from mount Sinai, were, by that very hearing, made like unto the angels; that they should never have begot children; never grown old; never died; but have been as the angels;—had not that unlucky business of the golden calf fallen out, and that turned them to sinful and mortal men again.’ There is a strange construction in the original Greek, *εἰς διαταγὰς*, which our English renders, “By the disposition of angels;” whereas the word, in the strictest propriety, should be read, “Unto the disposition of angels.” As if Stephen did rub their own opinion upon them, as is frequently done by the apostles, and that his meaning should be this; “You say, and conceive, that the very receiving of the law did translate and dispose them, that heard it, into the very pre-



dicare and state of angels ; and yet this brave law you have not kept. The law, that, you conceit, made others angels, you have made but dirt ; and that,—that, you think, had so noble an effect upon them, that heard it,—hath had no good effect upon you at all ; for ye have not kept it.”

But this interpretation I shall not insist upon, though it be very frequent with the apostle's arguing with the Jews, to confute them from their own opinions and tenets. I shall name but two to you ; 1 Cor. xi. 10, “ For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels :” where the apostle argues from their own concessions, practice, and custom. And Jude, ver. 9 : “ Yet Michael the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses :”—not that ever such a dispute was betwixt Michael or Christ, and the devil about Moses's body ; but the Jews have such a conceit and story, and we meet with it in their writings ; and the apostle useth an argument from their own saying to confute their doing. But,

Secondly, If I should say, That there were none but angels on the top of mount Sinai at the giving of the law, I should speak but the language of Stephen, that speaks the words that we have in hand ; at ver. 38, “ This Moses is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel, which spake to him in the mount Sinai.”—It is said, “ God spake all these words, and said :” and yet Stephen saith, “ It was the angel, that spake to him in mount Sinai.” But he means the angel ‘ of the covenant,’ the Lord Christ ; the archangel, or the chief or lord of all the angels.

And here let an Arian or Socinian, that denies the godhead of Christ, compare Moses and Stephen together, and learn to acknowledge the truth. Moses saith, It was *God* that spake to him in mount Sinai ; Stephen saith, It was the *angel*,—viz. the angel of the covenant, Christ, who, as the apostle says, is “ God blessed for ever.”

So that the great angel Christ, at the giving of the law, was the speaker, and all the created angels his silent attendants. And this observation might be useful in some points of divinity,—that Christ gave the law, as well as he gave the gospel. But,

Thirdly, The prophets and ministers, in Scripture-phrases, are usually called ‘ angels.’ Do I need to give instance? Eccles. v. 6 ; “ Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to



sin, neither say before the angel (or *minister* at the temple), that it is an error." Mal. ii. 7; "The priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger (or *angel*) of the Lord of hosts." And chap. iii. 1; "Behold, I send my *angel* (i. e. my *messenger*) before thy face." And, to spare more, you remember that in Rev. i. 20, "The seven stars are the angels (or *ministers*) of the seven churches."

So that the words before us may be reduced to this sense; "Ye received the law by the disposition, preaching, and explaining, of the prophets and ministers, and have not kept it." And to this sense speaks that, Heb. ii. 2; "For if the word spoken by angels,—that is, God's messengers the prophets,—were steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord?" That is, If the word, in the mouth of the prophets, might not be transgressed, but there was a just recompense of reward paid to the transgressor,—much more he must be paid, that neglects the salvation, spoken by the Lord Christ. And to the like sense may that be taken, in Gal. iii. 19; "The law was added because of transgression, being ordained," disposed of, preached, "by angels," i. e. prophets and ministers, "in the hand of a mediator."

And this sense of 'angels,' in the text, agrees very well with the words of Stephen a little before. "Your fathers persecuted and killed the prophets, the Lord's angels or messengers; and *ye* have received the law by such angels or ministers, but have not kept it." For the word *ἄγγελος*, or 'angel,' in the Greek tongue, signifies any messenger among men, as frequently as it does the angels in heaven.

And so, taking all these constructions together, the words do fairly lead us to consider, what cause or reason God hath given men to keep his law and commandments, but men will not keep them. Some have written large and excellent discourses, concerning the equity and reasonableness of Christian religion: and a large discourse might be made upon this particular in our religion: how agreeable it is to all the reason in the world, to obey and keep God's commandments, which he hath given. The Socinian requires a natural reason for what is supernatural, or else he must



not believe it. Because it cannot be demonstrated in logic, philosophy, mathematics, how three should be one, and one should be three,—therefore, we must not believe, that there are three persons in the Trinity, and but one God. But the wiser and more solid discourse would be, rather to show a reason, why we are to believe such a thing,—than to seek a reason, why, or how, such a thing is. For there may be a plain reason to believe an article of faith, the reason of which thing reason cannot fathom. So it may be but a saucy, wild, inquiry, what reason God had to give such and such particular commands. But it may be a pious and humble inquiry to search, what reason we have to keep his commandments, now he hath given them.

I. And the first reason we meet withal, in all regular method and order, is,—because he hath given them, therefore, we should keep them. “Ye received the law by the disposition of angels;” therefore, ye should have kept it. The command, in itself, does not only challenge our obedience of it, but the very giving of it does also challenge it. There is a bond in the giving, as well as a bond in the command itself,—viz. a bond of love and mercy, that would impart his will and commands. David<sup>b</sup> accounts it an incomparable mercy, that Israel had above other nations,—that “God made his law known to Jacob, and his statutes to Israel; and dealt not so with any nation besides, neither had they knowledge of his law.”

And God himself instituted the feast of Pentecost at that just time of the year, when the law was given, that they might celebrate the memorial of that great mercy; as he had instituted the feast of the Passover at that just time of the year, when they were delivered out of Egypt, that they might commemorate the memory of that mercy. He would have them to own the giving of the law an equal mercy with their delivery out of bondage. And what was the treasure of the ark, or the precious things, that were laid up there? The two tables, and pot of manna. The pot of manna, that minded them of the merciful and miraculous food, where-withal the Lord fed their bodies; and the two tables, which minded them of the divine and heavenly food of their souls, that “man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.



That passage is worthy a great deal of meditation, Luke xii. 47, 48 : "He that knew his master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes : but he that knew it not, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with a few stripes." Now, whether do you think it better to know our Master's will, or not to know it? To have God to impart his commands to us, or not to impart them? Herein it might seem better not to know his commands,—because, if we keep them not, not knowing them, there will follow the fewer stripes; but the more, if we know them and break them. But this weighs the balance down on the other side,—that it is impossible to avoid stripes, if there be not the knowledge of God's commands; it is possible to avoid them, if there be knowledge. More stripes, indeed, will be added, if we keep them not; but if we keep them, no stripes at all.

If we should dispute this question, Whether God showed more mercy in giving his law and commandments, or in giving the gospel and promises,—this might make some stand about the determination; because, though the promises are given of an infinite mercy, yet there is no possibility of coming up to the attaining of the promises, but in the way of the commandments. In the promises, God shows, that he would do good to us, and save us; and in the commandments, he shows, that he would have us to do good to ourselves, and save ourselves. Say not, therefore, that it was any severity in God to lay any such binding commandments upon men; acknowledge it mercy, that he would make known his will and commandments to thee. Wouldest thou change places with a heathen or pagan, that never heard of the law and commandments of God? Dost thou not think it an infinite mercy, that God hath revealed them to thee, and laid them before thee? In that very thing he shows, that he would not that thou shouldest perish without the knowledge of his law,—but that thou mightest know and keep his commandments, and live. His commandments are not bonds of iron, and fetters of brass; but they are the cords of men, and the bonds of love. God gives them in mercy, that we might know, what he would have us to do; and that we may do it, and be blessed in the deed : and this may be a second reason to urge our keeping of God's commandments,—viz.

II. Because God gave them, that we might keep them.



He gave them in mercy, that we might keep them for our own good. God gave them with this intent, that men should keep them; and that, keeping them, it might be well with them, both here and ever. He speaks this once and again himself; Ezek. xx. 11, "I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments; which if a man do, he shall ever live in them." And, Deut. xxx. 15; "I set before thee, this day," in giving thee my commandments, "life and death, blessing and cursing," that thou mayest obtain the one, and escape the other. And observe his pathetic and affectionate expression to this purpose, Deut. v. 29; "O that there were such a heart in this people, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children, for ever!"

So that these two things are observable, concerning the law and commandments of God:—

First, That the commandments of the law were given for a gospel end: that though the law be "the ministration of death and condemnation<sup>c</sup>;" yet, the direct end of it was for life and salvation<sup>d</sup>; "It was our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The Antinomians, sure, little consider, what injuriousness they offer to God, when they say, 'the law to Israel was a covenant of works;'—as if God had given them a covenant, which should do them no good. For, by the law, how little could they be justified! True, indeed, the law is called his covenant,—the two tables, the tables of his covenant; but he means his covenant of grace, to which the law aimed and directed. And the law was not a covenant of works; but a noble part of the administration of the covenant of grace. It is true, that the law killeth, curseth, condemneth; but that is the first end of it, not the last: neither did God ordain it, that it should only condemn, and there end,—but, by condemning, it might drive men on to seek salvation.

Secondly, That though the performing of the law, in one sense, is impossible, yet the keeping of the law, in another, is not impossible. It is impossible to perform the law so exactly, as to be justified *by* it,—yet, it is not so impossible to keep the law, as to be saved *in* it. Now, what is it to keep the law? When a man makes it only and entirely his rule to walk by,—and, as near as he can, keeps from declining

<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 9.

<sup>d</sup> Gal. iii. 24.



from it, either to the right hand or left. God never gave his law to fallen man with intention, that he should perfectly perform it,—when Adam did not, who had power to have done it. But he gave his law to fallen man, that he should make it his law; and that he should not walk lawless, or after his own will,—but that the law of God should be his law and rule. And he that makes the commandments and law of God his rule, whereby he walks, and keeps as close to that as he can,—this man keeps the law of God; though no man be able to perform it to justification.

Here, then, is a second enforcement to keep the commandments of God, because they were given us for that very purpose, and there is a blessing and happiness in keeping them.

III. I might speak of the ‘authority’ wherewith they were given, and of the ‘terror’ in which they were given, fire and thunder, &c. Both of which speak the reason and obligation for our obeying them. God commanded them, and he requires obedience; and he gave them in terror,—as intimating what must follow upon disobedience to them.

But I shall speak only to what the text especially speaks,—viz. of his giving his law and commandments “by the disposition of angels,” i. e. prophets and ministers, men like ourselves. You may remember that in Exod. xx, that, when the people had heard God speak from Sinai in such dreadful terror, they trembled and quaked, and stood afar off. And “‘we are not able (say they) to hear this terrible voice of God any more; if we do, we shall die. Take thou (speaking to Moses) the words from the mouth of God, and speak thou to us:’ be thou the angel, or messenger, of the Lord to us, to tell us what his mind and commandment is, ‘and we can hear it; but if the Lord himself speak thus to us any more, we are but dead men.’” And the Lord did accordingly; first giving his laws to Moses, that he might give them to the people; and afterward raising up prophets and ministers among them, that they might instruct them in his laws and commands:—and so in all succeeding generations. So that his commandments come now to us, not in fire and thunder, but in a still voice, by men like unto ourselves. Thus God draweth near to men in mildness, and softness, that, if it might be, he might win upon them. “We, ambassadors of God, beseech you in Christ’s stead,” that you would receive the commandments of God, and be saved.



IV. Lastly, The reasonableness of God's commandments is reason strong enough to enforce our keeping of his commandments, and obedience to them for the keeping them. Some of the commands, that God gave Israel in the ceremonial law, were such as the reason of them was not so readily to be found out. 'For why may not I wear linsey-woolsey (might a Jew say), as well as other people? Why may not I plough with an ox, and an ass, as well as other nations do? Why may not I eat such and such things good for diet, as other countries do?'—The reasons of these commands and prohibitions lay deep, and were not so easy to be discovered. But God hath laid no such commands upon us, but whose very equity is not only a bond upon us to keep them, but is a reason plain and apparent, why they were given.

What more reasonable thing in the world, than that we should all love God, and our neighbour? And what greater equity in the world, than that we should believe in Christ, deny the world, mortify corruption, live holily, and glorify God, and seek to save our own souls? Do we need to go to heaven, to fetch thence a reason of these commandments, or to go beyond the sea, to learn the equity of these precepts? Do we need to dig deep, to find a reason, why we should be bound to these things? Do they not, of themselves, speak all equity and reason in the world? And, as it is Rom. xii, that "we should offer up ourselves a holy living sacrifice to God," is it not a most "reasonable service," that is required of us?

Upon what hath been spoken, these two consequences must needs be concluded:—

First, That if there be so great reason to keep the commandments of God, how unreasonable a thing then is it, not to keep them! The Scripture speaketh not in vain, when it calls wicked men 'fools:' for they go against all reason, and have even lost their reason; "unreasonable men," as the apostle calls them,—men, that are without all reason. Is there any pleading for Baal, as Gideon's father spoke? Is any reason to be pleaded for men's transgressing the commands of God? "Produce your arguments, bring forth your strong reasons, to plead for your idols, and idolatry," saith God in derision to those, that worshipped stocks and stones. Produce your arguments, bring forth your strong reasons,



why you should transgress any of the commands of God. And think you, you can answer or satisfy God with all the arguments you can invent? 'I must break such a command, or I shall lose my pleasure; such a command, or I shall lose my profit; such a command, or I am crossed, and shall lose my will.' Excellent reasons, wherewithal to out-argue the divine will of God! and excellent pleadings, to lay before God, at the great day of judgment, and very likely to come off fairly with!

A good man, according to St. Peter's counsel, should "be ready to give a reason of the hope, that is in him." Can a wicked man give any reason, either of any hope in him, or of the evil that proceedeth from him? Sinning is a thing unreasonable; and where there is so great reason for the keeping of God's commands, the breaking them must needs be against all reason. And from this very thing, if there were no other, must the conscience of ungodly men in hell torture them for ever; because reason is now awaked with them, which they lulled asleep in their lusts here: and now they see, how it was against all reason, that they transgressed God's commands.

Secondly, If there be so great reason and equity to bind men, to keep the commandments of God,—certainly there is some reason and equity to bind them over to punishment, if they keep them not. Does God ever command,—and never demand, what becomes of his commands? Did he give them in such terror, and will no terror follow the breach of them?—



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

REVEL. XX. 5.

*But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

WHAT is meant by the “first resurrection” here, is to be discerned by the verses preceding. They tell you of Christ, “the great angel, binding the devil in a great chain, and casting him into the bottomless pit a thousand years (ver. 1—3), and of thrones set, and some sitting on them, and judgment given to them; and those that were martyred for the profession of Christ, living and reigning with him a thousand years (ver. 4); but the rest of the dead lived not again,” &c.

The end, for which Christ thus bound the devil being considered, will help to clear and unfold the whole matter; and that you have ver. 3, “That he should deceive the nations no more:” i. e. that he should not delude the heathen or Gentiles, as he had done. From the casting-off the Gentiles at Babel, the devil had kept all the world under a perpetual cheat, to worship idols, to sacrifice to devils, to live and walk in all the ways of the devil, till Christ sent his gospel among them to teach them better. This, then, was the chain, whereby the great angel of the covenant, Christ, tied up the devil, that he should not cheat the world as he had before done,—viz. sending the gospel among them, by the preaching and power of which he restrained and quelled that power and deluding of the devil. The heathen, by the instruction of the gospel, come to know, and worship, and fear, the true God,—to cast away their idols, to defy the devil and his works, and to laugh his oracles and delusions to scorn. Dagon is now fallen before the ark of God, and his head and hands broken off; and now Dagon is left but a mere stump. Jericho’s walls are fallen flat, with no other engine but only the sound of trumpets made of rams’ horns; the strong hold

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1233.



of Satan cast down with the only sound of the great trump of the gospel: and he himself tied up, that he shall no more cheat and cozen the world, till a thousand years be expired; and then he is loosed again; and cozens the world by Popery now, as he had done by heathenism then.

The poor heathen, thus recovered out of the power of Satan, by the coming-in of the gospel among them, did creep out of their graves of ignorance, idolatry, and sinfulness, in which they had lain stinking and rotting so many ages together; had life put into them, to live to God: they are awaked out of their dust and long sleep, to see, and act, and live, as the children of God. And this is that, which is here called, 'the first resurrection.'

And the very same title doth our Saviour give to the very same thing, John v. 25; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live." That he speaks of the 'first resurrection:'—and of the last, at ver. 28, 29, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the grave, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life,—and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." And do but consider, how great and near a parallel there is betwixt this first, and that last, resurrection. That last shall raise men from the death of the body; this, raised the heathen from the death of the soul: that, shall be by the powerful sound of the trump of God; this, was by the powerful sound of the trumpet of the gospel: that, will be acted by an infinite power, raising men dead in the grave; this, was acted by an infinite power, raising men dead in sins.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again, till the thousand years were finished."—And did they live then? The millenary will tell you, Yes. For his conceit about these thousand years is this: 'That, at the beginning of the thousand years, those that suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake, shall be raised out of their graves, and reign with Christ a thousand years; and when the thousand years are finished, there shall be the general resurrection.' And, accordingly, they construe the words before us to this sense; "The rest of the dead lived not, until the thousand years were finished:" and then lived

An opinion, as like the opinion of the Jews, as one egg



is like another. They think, Christ shall reign among them on earth a thousand years' pompous reign: so do these.—They think, that, at the beginning of his reign, the holy prophets and patriarchs shall be raised from death, and reign with him: so these.—They think, that, at the end of his thousand years' reign, there shall be the general resurrection, and world of eternity: so do these.—So that the millenary doth Judaize, and he knows it not; he is fallen into the Jews' opinion, and is not aware of it.

This Book of Revelation is exceeding full of expressions, that allude to the Jewish customs and opinions. I say, again, 'is exceeding full;' but it were ridiculous to think, that such passages are to be construed in the same literal sense, that the Jews took them in. Only those common and well known things, as being familiar to the nation, are used to signify or illustrate some spiritual sense or matter. Expressions are used in this place, that are agreeable in sound to the opinion of the Jews; but not agreeable in sense, but signifying something else. They conceit a personal pompous reign of Christ on earth, a thousand years, in all earthly state and gallantry. These words speak of a reign of Christ a thousand years, but they mean his reign and ruling by his word and Spirit; and of his subduing and bringing the nations into subjection and obedience, but by the ministry of the gospel. They speak of those that had been martyred, reigning with him;—but the meaning only is to intimate, that the children of his kingdom must suffer persecution, and that they shall lose nothing by their persecution; but, as the apostle speaks, "If they suffer with him, they shall also reign with him." Let us read the verse before; "I saw the souls of them, that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God: and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

"But the rest of the dead lived not again, till the thousand years were finished."—And did they live then? That is not imaginable, the time of reviving being then past and over. For, at the end of the thousand years, Satan is let loose again, brings in Popery and Mahometism; and the world grows as heathenish, as it had been before Satan's



binding and imprisoning. So that they had lost the opportunity of reviving, which was in the thousand years.

The word *until* signifies doubly, either 'concluding,' or else 'excluding:' you may see my meaning by these examples:—The master, in the parable, gives talents to his servants, and bids them, "occupy *till* I come." Here the word *until* concludes, that he would come again. "This iniquity shall not be purged from you *till* you die," Isa. xxii. 14; here the word *till* excludes them from ever having their iniquity purged. The word *until*, in the text, is of this latter construction; and means, that they let slip, and embraced not, the opportunity of reviving all the thousand years, when was the time of reviving; and so they lived not again at all.

And if we well observe the histories both of the heathen and of the church, we shall find, that, all along this time, that the gospel was dispersing through the world, there were multitudes of heathens, that would not forsake their heathenism; and multitudes in the church, in a little time, fell to superstition and worshipping of images; and so even turned to heathenism also. Therefore, God suffers Satan to be let loose again, to go about in the world again with his delusions: he brings in Popery in the west, and Mahometism in the east; and so the whole world is returned to blindness and darkness again; because, when the light shone, they would none of the light. They would not embrace the offer of reviving, when the time and opportunity of reviving was: therefore, "they lived not again, till those thousand years were finished," and then the time of living again was over.

So that, in the words before us, we observe three things:—

I. That the raising of the Gentiles from the death of sin, is called 'the first resurrection.'

II. That, in that time of raising, some lost the opportunity, and would not be raised.

III. That they, losing the opportunity of rising and living, missed always of rising and living.

I. As to the first thing named,—that the raising of the Gentiles from the death of sin, is called the 'first resurrection:'—it gives us occasion to consider, how a man's getting out of the state of sin into the state of grace is a resurrection, or a rising from the dead. And withal to compare this first and last resurrection together, and to see what connexion there is between them.



I. To Sadducees and atheists, that deny the resurrection at the last day, because they can see no reason for it, I should propose this question,—Whether there hath not been a raising of dead souls from the death of sin? Abraham once an idolater: was not his soul dead then? Yet, afterward, he was the great father of the faithful. Was there not then a resurrection of that dead soul?—Manasseh the king, an idolater, a conjurer, a sacrificer of his sons to Molech:—was not this man dead in trespasses and sins? and yet this man afterward was a penitent, a convert, a promoter of piety, and the true worshipper of God. Was not here a resurrection of a dead soul?—Is God less able to raise a dead body out of the grave, than to raise a dead soul out of its sins? Nay, is not this as great a work of God, as that will be? Christ, that can make such vile souls, that they may be like unto his most glorious soul, cannot he make these vile bodies, “that may be like his most glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself?”

II. But let us look upon this first resurrection a little; and “blessed and holy is he, that hath part in it; over such a one shall the second death have no power.” In some things it is not parallel or like to the second resurrection; in more, it is.

First, The second resurrection shall be of all bodies; this first, is not of all souls. And if we come to seek for the reason of the difference, where shall we find it? Cannot the same power, that shall raise all bodies, also raise all souls? The reason of the difference lies not in the difference of that power. Were it not as much for the glory of God, to raise all souls, as to raise all bodies? The reason of the difference lies not there neither. For God chooseth freely the ways of glorifying himself, and is not tied to this or that way by any necessity. But the reason of the difference lieth,—

First, In his own will, as the apostle resolves it. “He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will, he hardeneth.” But,

Secondly, As in reference to the persons raised, he raiseth what souls he raiseth, by virtue of his covenant of grace; but he raiseth not all the bodies, he raiseth, by the same virtue. It is said concerning Christ<sup>a</sup> himself, that

<sup>a</sup> Heb. xiii. 20.



“God brought him from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant.” So doth he, by the blood and virtue of the same covenant, bring from the dead every soul, that he brings from the dead; but he doth not so every body, that he brings from the dead. Now, the tenor of the covenant is, “Hearken to my voice, and live: incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live<sup>b</sup>.” And to the very same tenor are those words of our Saviour, mentioned before, John v. 25; “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live.” What kind of language is this? ‘The dead shall hear?’—‘All the dead shall hear, and yet only they that hear, shall live?’ What needed more to have been said, than that ‘the dead shall hear his voice, and live?’ But his meaning is, All the dead heathen shall have the gospel, and hear the word of it brought among them; and they that hear it, that is, obey it and follow it, shall live.

Let me repeat that which I alleged from Isa. lv. 3, and add what follows there; “Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” Now, that by ‘sure mercies of David,’ is meant ‘the resurrection of Christ,’ the apostle teacheth us, in Acts xiii. 34; “And as concerning that he raised him from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.” The resurrection of Christ, therefore, are the sure mercies of Christ. For that, ‘by David,’ is meant Christ, it were easy to show; and it is so confessed by the Jews themselves, in their expositions of that place. It was the ‘sure mercy,’ that God gave to Christ himself, of which he so rejoiceth, Psal. xvi. 9; “My heart is glad, my glory rejoiceth; and my flesh also shall rest in hope; because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,” &c. And it is the ‘sure mercy’ of Christ, that God gave to the members of Christ, that he raised him from the dead, and imparts to them the benefit of his resurrection. And this is called there ‘an everlasting covenant,’ that he makes with them. That as he gave Christ a resurrection, so he will give them a resurrection; the first and the latter rain, the first and the latter resurrection. First, to raise their souls by the virtue of his covenant from the death

<sup>b</sup> Isa. lv. 3.



of sin in his good time, and to raise their bodies by virtue of the same covenant at the last day. Of which last our Saviour speaks three times over: John vi. 39; "This is my Father's will, which hath sent me,—that of all that he hath given, I should lose none, but raise him up at the last day. (Ver. 40:) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one, that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up the last day." And, ver. 44; "None can come to me,—except the Father, which sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Will Christ raise up all persons in the world at the last day, upon these terms? Ye say, No, but only those that comply with his covenant, to come to him, see him, believe in him. His power and justice will raise all others; the virtue of his covenant will raise these.

Now, I suppose, you easily see how to distinguish betwixt the tenor of his covenant, and the virtue of his covenant. The 'tenor' of his covenant is, "Hear and obey my voice, and live." The 'virtue' of his covenant, is his unfailing truth, power, goodness, that will give life to them, that hear his voice and obey him.—Thus you see one reason of the difference, why he raiseth but some souls here from the death of sin, but will raise all bodies from the death of the grave.

Thirdly, Another reason of difference may be given, for that, at the last day, he will raise all the persons in the world from their graves, that he may glorify himself; but he raiseth only some few from their sins, that they may glorify him. And there is a great deal of difference betwixt God's glorifying himself upon men, as he did upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians,—and bringing men heartily and laboriously to glorify him, and to live to his glory. But,

Secondly, A main difference in these two resurrections,—the soul from sin, and the body from the grave,—is, that the first resurrection is with the desire of him that is raised; the latter, will be in despite of thousands, that will have no mind of it. "God will bring thee to judgment<sup>c</sup>," is a cutting saying; but all the world shall never be able to take the edge of it off. But let wicked men struggle, and strive, and tug never so hard against the resurrection, God will bring them to it, and no resisting. But the first resurrec-

<sup>c</sup> Eccles. xi. 9.



tion, or the raising a soul from the death of sin, how sweet, how welcome, how comfortable, is it, to every one to whom it comes! "Thy people will be willing in the day of thy power," and help forward their own rising as much as they can: "and the spirit and bride say, Come:" and the soul and heart say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" and let me see this resurrection.

And thus have we seen some circumstances, in which the first and second resurrections differ, and are at distance; let us now consider, wherein they agree and shake hands one with another.

Observe, that the Scripture speaks, in some places, of the resurrection, as if it were to be no resurrection, but of just and holy ones only; as you may take notice in 1 Cor. xv. and 1 Thess. iv.—That there shall be a resurrection of the unjust as well as of the just, the Scripture assures us over and over again; but it more especially calls that a resurrection, that is a resurrection indeed, and not a raising to be cast down again. "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more;" as the apostle tells us; "Death hath no more dominion over him." And the Scripture doth more especially call that a resurrection, that is written after his copy,—for a man to rise from the dead, to die no more. That man is but little helped, which we read of in the prophet, that, in the way, met a lion,—and flying from him into the house, a scorpion bit him. And can you call that a resurrection cheerfully and savourily, when a man is raised from one death to die another?

"Blessed and holy is he (saith this our Apocalyptic) that hath part in the first resurrection! over such a one, the second death shall have no power." But if he have no share in the first resurrection,—at the second resurrection, his rising is but to remove out of one death into another, out of one deadly room in the prison into a worse. Therefore, the Scripture, in the places mentioned, speaks of the resurrection, as if belonging only to the holy and righteous; speaking of it, as it is in its proper definition, a rising again from death, and not flitting from one death to another; it speaks of the second resurrection, as it is akin and related to the first, that being an arising from one death,—this, from another.

I. And this is the first parallel that we may make between them,—they are both a rising from death, that, neither in the



one, nor in the other, death hath any more dominion: not the death of sin in the first resurrection,—nor death in the grave, in the second.

Shall we dispute, whether the first or second resurrection be the greater work, the greater business? They are, as it were, brethren: and to whether belongs the privilege of birth-right? It hath been said of old, that sleep is the elder brother of death; and, certainly, with as much right, we may call ‘rising from the death of sin’ elder brother to ‘rising from death in the grave.’ May we not call ‘sin’ the elder brother of ‘damnation,’—and, on the contrary, ‘grace’ the elder brother of ‘glory,’—and ‘the rising of the soul’ elder brother to the ‘rising of the body?’ What is the first formulation, or corner-stone, that is laid for the building-up of a happy and blessed resurrection at the last day? Will you lay it in the power of God? That can raise men to damnation, as well as salvation. Will you lay it in the will of God? That will raise up some to damnation, as well as some to salvation. But you must lay it in the ‘first resurrection,’ or the rising of the soul out of the grave of sin.

“Thou shalt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption.” The word is so written in Hebrew, that it may be read ‘holy one,’ or ‘holy ones.’ We know, the ‘holy One’ of God did not, could not, see corruption; and the reason was, because he was so holy a one: and it must be holiness, that must be the beginning, the great promoter, of our incorruption. And get but the soul happily raised and cleared of her corruption, the happy raising and clearing from the corruption of the body will certainly follow.

You remember the expression of the apostle, “If you be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above<sup>d</sup>.” We risen with Christ? It is well worth considering, how that is done. There were some, that arose with him, indeed, out of their graves, at his resurrection<sup>e</sup>. Of these it might well be said, “you are risen with Christ:” but how of others? The meaning is, ‘Not only you are risen, as Christ is risen; but you are ingrafted into Christ’s resurrection, and risen united to his risings.’—The apostle warrants the expression of ‘ingrafted,’ Rom. vi. 5; “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” So that in the instant of the first re-

<sup>d</sup> Col. iii. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. xxvii. 52.



resurrection, that any man attains to, rising from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,—that man is ‘ingrafted,’ ‘implanted,’ into Christ; and as sure of a happy resurrection, as that Christ is risen.

II. A second parallel of the first and second resurrection, is in regard of the instrumental cause of both. The second resurrection will be effectuated by the all-powerful voice of Christ, calling all out of their graves. “All that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth<sup>f</sup>.” This the apostle calls the ‘voice of the archangel, and trump of God,’ 1 Thess. iv. 16.—And, in 1 Cor. xv, “The trump shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.” Let us, by the way, pause a little, and take up some thoughts of this ‘trump’ or ‘trumpet.’

The father of old said, that ‘whether he were eating or drinking, or whatsoever he did, he still thought he heard this trumpet sounding this alarm,—Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.’ Suppose you heard it now,—would it not startle you? We have been startled many a time with a dreadful clap of thunder: what amazement and dread would you be in, if you heard this alarm? the voice of the trumpet, that will make heaven and earth to quake, and to vanish away: the voice of the archangel and his trumpet, that will rouse and awake all the world, and whosoever hath slept the longest in the dust: the alarm of the trumpet, that will not only force all to awake, but to rise, and to come and appear at the judgment.

Now, what parallel doth the first resurrection bear to this? Why, that is an alarm also of the trumpet of the gospel. How oft is the ministry of the word of God compared to a trumpet? (Isa. xxvii. 13:) “The great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come, that were ready to perish in Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem:” that is, the sound of the gospel shall gather them, and bring them to worship the true God.—(Matt. xxiv. 31:) “He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds;” that is, ‘he shall send his ministers with the sound of the gospel.’—Think of the sound of the trumpet at Sinai, and think of the trumpet at the last day: at Sinai, to cause a first resurrection, or to

<sup>f</sup> John, v. 28.



bring Israel out of their sinful condition, to rise and live to God; and, at the last day, to call to account about the keeping of that law, that was then given.

So that would you know,—whether you shall have a happy resurrection at the last day,—consider with yourself, whether you have come to the first resurrection even to this day. And if you would know whether you have attained that,—consider, whether you have been raised by the trump of the gospel. It is to thy first resurrection thou must look, to judge of thy speeding at the second. These two are linked together, and have relation one to another; as the feast of Pentecost, when barley-harvest was now got in, had relation to the second day in Passover-week, when barley-harvest first begun. The resurrection will be a fit harvest for every man to reap according as he hath sowed. There is none, but would willingly have a resurrection at the last day to life, and not to damnation. Begin thy resurrection here; and as thy soul is risen from the death of sin, so mayest thou expect thy body's rising from death in the grave.

The Jews speak of a little bone in some part of a man's body; they call it 'Luz;' which, they say, will never be consumed in the grave, but will be, as it were, a seed sown in the ground, out of which will spring the resurrection of the whole body. I may say, graciousness in the soul is rather the seed of the resurrection of the body, that will cause it to rise to life and happiness. And thus much concerning the first observation.

II. That in the time of the first resurrection, that is, the raising the Gentiles from the death of sin, some lost the opportunity, and would not be raised.—“The rest of the dead lived not again,” because they were not raised by a first resurrection, when season and opportunity of living again was in date, that is, for the thousand years mentioned in the text.

Whether you take the 'thousand years' for a certain determinate time of exactly so many years, or that a certain number is used for an uncertain, and this number the rather, because it is used by the Jews;—whether the one or the other, you are to begin to count from the time the gospel was first sent among the Gentiles. And count such a space of time forward, and you will find in story, that though the gospel had gone through the world, in that time, and made the world Christian, and vast numbers were converted to



Christianity; yet there was still a struggling to have kept the world heathen, and multitudes were unwilling to come off from their old heathen and idolatrous religion.

For three hundred years, the emperors and all the magistrates were enemies to the gospel; and if any of them did not persecute the Christians, as but few but did, yet they maintained their heathen religion, might and main. And the great wise men of the world (as they were esteemed), the philosophers and learned ones, were the greatest sticklers for the maintaining of the worshipping of their many false and idol gods all along, when the emperors were become Christians. Which may very well make us to remember the words of the apostle<sup>s</sup>; “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” I cannot omit two remarkable passages.

The one of Julian the emperor, who was brought up a Christian, but turned heathen; nay, who, as stories relate of him, had been a lecturer in a Christian congregation, but became the bitter enemy to Christianity. He, when the emperors had been Christian for two successions,—viz. Constantine and Constantius; and the Christian religion had flourished in their times well towards forty years, and the heathen idolatrous temples shut up, and Christian churches opened;—he opens the heathen temples, shuts up the Christian, promotes idolatry again, and the worship of the heathen gods; and hath many heathen philosophers, Jamblichus, Maximus, Ecebolus, Libanius, and I know not how many more, to spur him on to it.

And the other passage I have, is a clause in a letter of Adrian the emperor to one of his nobles; in which he tells him, “I have been in Egypt, and there I observed the Christians worshipping Christ and idols; yea, the Christian bishops worshipping Christ and Serapis.” Which Serapis was the great god and idol of the Egyptians.

By all which we may see the truth of what is asserted in the text, “That the rest of the dead lived not again,” but continued still in their dead condition of blindness and heathenism: and may also see the reason, why they lived not again,—viz. because they would not; but chose death before life, to continue in their dead condition of being heathens,



rather than to become Christians, and live. And from this we may see, how just it was with God, to let Popery and Mahometism invade the world, and to reduce it to its heathenish ignorance, blindness, and superstition again, because it was so unwilling to part with its ignorance, blindness, and superstition. Because they would not "receive truth in the love of it," as the apostle says, it was just with God "to give them up to strong delusions, to believe a lie."

And by that sad example we may observe, how men lose and let slip the opportunities, that God affords them for their own good; and so, losing them, they lose themselves. Jerusalem knows not the time of her visitation, and the things of her peace; and so poor Jerusalem is lost, and her opportunity gone for ever. There is a critical time, when there is a season opportune, for the good of the souls, and the clock strikes 'time is;' but foolish men too commonly take so little notice of it, that the brazen head cries, 'time is past,' and breaks to pieces.

If we should take up the dispute, Whether God do not set his time and stint, how long he will let men have opportunity of rising from the death of sin,—are there not many evidences for the affirmative, that he doth? He sets his stint and date, how long he will afford a man the opportunity, that his body may live; and doth he not the like for the living of the soul? Doth not God shut the gates of mercy against sinful souls even in this life, and doth he not shut the gates of repentance? These, in the text, that lived not again,—was not all possibility of living again taken away from them, because they had let the time and opportunity of reviving slip, and go, and neglected it? Esau lost his opportunity; and, having lost that, he found no place of recovery, though he sought it with tears. And, John xii. 39, 40, "They could not believe, because Esaias had said, He hath blinded their eyes," &c. Why? were Esaias's words a charm to them, that they could not believe?—No: they could not believe, because those words of Esaias were verified upon them. And they had so long wilfully blinded their own eyes, and hardened their hearts, that God had put-to his seal; and blinded and hardened them, that they were now past all possibility of believing.

In that great dispute and inquiry, how God hardeneth men's hearts, of which there is so frequent mention and inti-



mation in Scripture;—the first crisis towards the determination of it is, that God hath set such men a time, how long they may be in a possibility of repenting and believing; which when it is come, and they are still impenitent and unbelieving, and will not repent and believe,—he shuts the door against them, that they shall not repent and believe.

Upon the consideration of all which, we have advertisement what we have to do;—viz. to strive after this first resurrection, while the Lord affords time and opportunity; and, when God offers the advantage of our living again, not to be enemies of our own reviving.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

2 SAM. XIX. 29.

*I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land:—*

AND I think, it is said very nobly, and as became a David; a prince of prudence and clemency; a prince of faithfulness and justice,—though I cannot tell, who thinks so of these words, but myself. I believe, there are but few, that have either commented upon these words, or that do read them, but they have some hard thoughts of David, as if he dealt but somewhat hardly with poor Mephibosheth.

I am sensible what disadvantage I go upon, if I go about to plead for him, though I speak for a king: for it is much that a first-born gloss or exposition upon a difficult place of Scripture doth gain, by being first-born. And the commonly and old received opinion upon these words, hath so got prepossession in the hearts of most, by privilege of its birth-right,—that a younger interpretation will hardly find entertainment, because it is a younger brother.

The Jews do commonly speak their minds upon these words in this manner: “I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. At the same instant divine Providence said, Then let Rehoboam and Jeroboam divide the kingdom:”—accounting this action of David so horrid, unjust a thing, as that it deserved and brought that sore judgment of rending ten tribes from David’s kingdom. Christian expositors are no more favourable to him in their construction, but lay the very same accusation to his charge, of harshness, rashness, and injustice, in this case; for giving away half Mephibosheth’s, innocent Mephibosheth’s, land to his lying servant. Come, let us reason together, with him, and with ourselves, a little.

I. “And is this thy kindness, O David, to thy old dear friend Jonathan, the man of thy love, and the man of thy covenant, to use his son so very hardly, yea, though he had given thee some just offence? Thou once professedst, with tears, ‘Thy love to me, O Jonathan, was wonderful, passing

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1240.



the love of women!' And now, this unkindness of thine, O David, were as wonderful, passing the unkindness of an enemy."

II. Is David become so weak in wisdom and judgment, as to be so baffled and befooled by a cheating fellow, and never to discover him? or is he become so easy and soft as to sit down with such a gull put upon him, and he never goes about to unguil himself? It is true, indeed, he was surprised with the lie, when he was fleeing for his life, chafed with anxiety and vexation; but can we think David of so sleepy a conscience, as so rashly to undo a poor man, by giving away all his land upon a bare information, and never to take second thoughts, whether he had done the man wrong or no? And how easy was it for him, before he here met with Mephibosheth, to have informed himself of Mephibosheth's behaviour, and of his innocence!

It is said, in ver. 17, that a thousand men of Benjamin met him at Jordan, when he was returning: and is it likely, that he would not inquire of them about him? or that they could not, or would not, inform him of his demeanour, who was now the chief man of their tribe? Had they so lost the love and remembrance of their old master Saul, and his good son Jonathan, as to see his son so undone by a cheat, and none of them to testify his integrity?

III. His very beard and clothes might bear witness for him, if nobody else would: and these might give Ziba the lie, and satisfy David, that the poor man was falsely accused: "for he had neither trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, since the king's going away, until his return again;" but had utterly neglected and been careless of himself, as showing really, that he was really afflicted for the king's affliction. And would not David, think you, believe such clear and evident testimonies as these?

IV. It is said, 1 Kings xv. 5, "That David did that, which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing, that he commanded, all the days of his life, but only in the matter of Uriah, the Hittite." Truly, it might very well have been added, "And in the matter of the wronged Mephibosheth;"—if he did so condemn him to the forfeiture of his land, upon a false accusation.

V. And lastly, Can David be so ready as he was, to pardon Shimei, who cursed him to his face,—and be so hard to



be reconciled to Mephibosheth, who was only accused behind his back? And the Holy Ghost seemeth to hint this very thing and observation to us. For who observeth not the dislocation of this story we are upon? that it is laid out of its proper place, and that it is placed before its proper time?

In the story immediately next before this, you have David at Jordan, there speaking with Shimei, at ver. 23. And, in the story immediately next after this, you have David still at Jordan, there taking his leave of Barzillai, ver. 31. And yet, in this story between, you have David met with Mephibosheth at Jerusalem, ver. 25. This is not done at random and by any oversight, as if the Holy Ghost had forgot himself, as we poor fumbling creatures are many times lost in our tale; but the sacred Spirit hath purposely thus methodized the story with such a dislocation, for our more narrow observation and clearer instruction. In the story before, you have Shimei and Ziba meeting David at Jordan; a very proper couple, and fitly yoked together, like to like. The one of them had cursed the king to his face, and the other had cozened him to his face: the one had abused him with rough railing; and the other had abused him with a smooth lie.

What passed between David and Shimei, the story tells you; but not a word of what passed betwixt David and Ziba. That is comprehended in this story of what passed betwixt David and Mephibosheth, because Ziba's business was Mephibosheth's concernment.

The story tells, that Shimei fell down before David, and confessed his fault, and begged pardon: and if Ziba did not so too, he was a fool, as well as he had been a knave before: for he might well conclude, that his knavery either was already, or else would be, discovered. Well; whether he did or no,—the Holy Ghost, as soon as he hath related how Shimei had obtained his pardon, comes and relates this conference betwixt David and Mephibosheth; as prompting us to think, that if David were so readily reconciled to Shimei, who had been guilty of so great a crime, he would not be irreconcilable to Mephibosheth, who, indeed, was guilty of none. And if he had not given this hint, by this strange placing of this story, our own reason might suggest such an argument to us:—That, certainly, if he so easily was friends with Shimei, whose villany he himself was an eye and ear-



witness of,—he cannot be so inexorable to Mephibosheth, his dear Jonathan's son, against whom he had only the accusation of a false tale : That, if he would not hearken to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, when he urged him for revenge upon Shimei, but puts him back with “what have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah,” ver. 22,—certainly he would not be so harsh and inexorable to Mephibosheth's fair and just apology and vindication of himself.

Upon these reasons that I have mentioned, to spare more,—I must crave leave to refuse the common and very generally-received exposition and interpretation of these words of David, that tends not a little to his crimination and reproach. And let me crave your patience and pardon, if I take the humble boldness to construe his words to a clear contrary sense, and a construction that tends to his honour and vindication.

When David takes Mephibosheth first to his notice, friendship, and table, 2 Sam. ix, he hath these words first to Mephibosheth, at ver. 7 ; “Fear not, Mephibosheth : for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake.” And this, at ver. 3, he phraseth, “showing the kindness of God.” But, surely, it was neither ‘kindness of God,’ nor kindness of man, if he should, so unkindly at last, take his land from him, and be so kind as give it to his servant. At ver. 10, he hath these words to Ziba ; “I have given to thy master's son, all that pertained to Saul and all his house. Thou, therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring-in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat : but Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread always at my table.”—A piece of a riddle ; and who can unriddle it ? “Thy master's son shall always have food at my table ; and yet thou must till the land, that thy master's son may have his food to eat !”—We must plough with Samson's heifer to find out the riddle ; and the twelfth verse is that, that will help us : “And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba, were servants to Mephibosheth.” And now, upon this text and this case, let me ask these two questions :—

First, Who was it, that Ziba must till the land for, that he might have food ? It was for Micha ; for Mephibosheth himself had food at the king's table. But,



Secondly, Whence must Mephibosheth have to maintain himself in clothes, and to maintain his port and retinue at the court, according to his place, and rank, and quality? Did David find him these, as he did find him meat and drink? Certainly, when he took him to his table, upon the restoring of Saul's land to him, we can little think, that he did it, because he would have him to live of mere alms; but he did it out of pure respect to him for his father's sake. Not so much as if Mephibosheth had need to be at the king's finding, when he had now all his grandfather's land; but that the king would honour him with the participation of his own table and friendship, and because he would enjoy his company.

So, in this chapter, out of which the text is taken,—the king invites Barzillai to go and live with him at Jerusalem, and he would feed him at his own table, ver. 33. What! would he have Barzillai to live purely upon his alms? No; that, he knew, he needed not; for the verse before tells, that “Barzillai was a very great man, and that he had provided the king sustenance, whilst he lay at Mahanaim.” And because he had done so, the king invites him to his own table; not out of mere alms, but out of kindness and gratitude; and because he would enjoy his good society.

Do you not, by this time, see, how Mephibosheth's land is divided betwixt him and Ziba? Not to make Ziba a proprietor,—but a tenant, or rather a bailiff or steward: he to till the land and to bring-in the profits, and the one part to go to find Micha food and maintenance, and Ziba's house,—and the other part to go for Mephibosheth's maintenance and the maintaining his retinue at the court. And thus he and Ziba divide the land from the very first; and it was David's own project, from the very first, that it should be thus divided; Ziba to enjoy half for the maintenance of Micha,—and to pay rent for the other half, for the maintenance of Mephibosheth.

And to this purpose is observable, that it is said, that “all that dwelt in Ziba's house, were servants to Mephibosheth:” and how could they be so, when Mephibosheth and they lived so far asunder, as he at the court in Jerusalem, and Ziba's house in the land of Benjamin,—but that they were all servants to him in this sense,—that they were all under him as chief landlord,—that they were bailiffs for him



upon his land and demesnes, for the maintenances of his son, who was with them in the house, and Mephibosheth himself, who was at the king's table.

When David was surprised with Ziba's lie, then he said, "Behold, thine is all that pertaineth to Mephibosheth," chap. xvi. 4. But did he mean withal, "Behold, thine is all that pertaineth to Micha?" That had been yet a more unjust act, than giving away Mephibosheth's land; for he had no accusation against Micha, though he had against Mephibosheth: so that then it was at this point, "Ziba and Micha divide the land; for poor Mephibosheth was clean shut out." But when David was come again to Jerusalem, and come again to himself, then it is at this, "Now, Mephibosheth and Ziba divide the land,"—as it was in the first contrivance and disposal: Ziba, to have one part for Micha's maintenance; and Mephibosheth the other, for his.—And to this sense may his saying, "I have said," be very well applied to David's first determination about the land: though I know it may also be applicable to his present saying; "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters?" I said from the very first, when I gave thee thy father's land, and took thee to mine own table, that the land should be so divided betwixt thee and Ziba, for the use of thyself and thy son Micha; and I hold to the same determination, and I say so still."

Thus have I laid before you, with all humble submission to better judgments, my thoughts and conceptions upon these words. And now, what can I say more upon this text?

To take up from it any observation or doctrine, either dogmatical or practical, I know not how. For I must either frame it according to the common sense given upon the words, which I refuse; and then I should lay the foundation of my building upon ground I like not: or I must frame it according to mine own sense, that I have given; and then I shall lay the foundation of my building upon a ground, which, it may be, you like not. Therefore, I shall, to avoid these rocks on either hand, steer a middle course; and speak to that, which the very ambiguity of the text, and the dislocation of the story out of which it is taken, may justly call upon us to observe,—viz.

'That the style and difficulty of Scripture requireth all serious and sober study of the Scripture.'



You see the style here, and you see the difficulties here : the story laid out of its natural and proper order : and the words of the text capable of two, and those even contrary, senses. The former not done by heedlessness or at peradventure ; the latter, not as if the Scriptures were not of a fixed and steady sense : but both to stir up the more serious and sober study of Scripture.

It is our Saviour's prescription, as our English reads it, John v. 39, "*Search the Scriptures ;*" and if you ask a reason, he gives you two in that verse, and divers more may be given. Search and study the Scriptures, because it is the Scriptures, the writing of God, the discovery of the mind of God, the witness of the Son of God, the revealing of the glory of God :—to be studied to make one wise, to be studied to make one holy, to make one happy.

But I shall not speak of these, or of what other reasons of like kind, might be alleged to very serious study of Scripture ; but I shall bring my discourse to a closer and narrower compass, to urge a reason only from its style and difficulty :—The style and difficulty of Scripture requires all sober and serious study of it.—The thing that I assert, will, on the one hand, please the Romanist, if he may limit it to his sense ; but, on the other hand, it will not so very well please the enthusiast. The one will tell you, that the Scripture is so difficult, indeed, that it requires all serious study ; but of the clergy only, for it is too difficult for laity to meddle withal : the other will tell you, there is no difficulty at all in the Scripture, to them, that have the Spirit ; but all things easy enough to understand and explicate, by revelation, without any study. So that here are two rocks more for us to sail, and hold a middle course, between,—lest we dash either upon the one or upon the other : and the card and compass I shall go by, shall be the Scripture itself.

The Scripture itself tells us, there are difficulties in it : and, if it did not so in words, yet we might easily find it in deed. And I might need no other proof of this assertion, than such a one as he gave to prove motion, who rose out of his chair and moved up and down. "*Tolle, lege,*" "*take up the Bible and read pressly ;*"—and that very thing will show you, that you had need to read pressly, because of the difficulty.



Let me but observe, in our entrance into this matter, these two things to you :—

I. That the difficulty of Scripture doth so much require study, that none, but by serious study, can perceive its difficulty :—as the philosopher could not so much as imagine, how hard it was to define God, till he set seriously to study upon the matter ; and then he found it. The farther you go in Ezekiel's waters<sup>a</sup>, the deeper you go ; and the more you study the Scriptures seriously, the more cause you will still find to study them seriously. And it is not the least cause of their error, that hold the explaining of Scripture is so very easy, that they have not attained to so much skill in the study of the Scriptures as to see their hardness. And I doubt not, but I could show them scores, nay, hundreds, of very hard and obscure places, which they had never the eyes to see : and I doubt as little, that they would find as little eyesight to resolve them, if they saw them.

II. The Holy Ghost hath purposely penned the Scriptures so as to challenge all serious study of them. Else, what think you is the meaning of that, “He that readeth, let him understand<sup>b</sup> ?”

Peter<sup>c</sup> tells us, that there are divers things in Paul's Epistles hard to be understood ; and why did the Holy Ghost dictate them so hard by Paul ? and why did not Peter explain them, who had the same Spirit ? As to that passage of Peter, you may very well remember the parable of the wounded man betwixt Jerusalem and Jericho. The priest and Levite pass by, look on him, but afford him no help. And why does Peter so by those hard places, and afford them no explication ? Because the Holy Ghost hath penned Scripture so as to challenge all serious study. He could have penned all so plain, that he that runneth, might have read them ; but he hath penned them in such a style, that he that will read them, must not run and read, but sit down and study.

It were a very long task, indeed, to show, wherein the difficulty of Scripture doth consist in every particular. I shall give you but a taste in two or three heads :—

I. To begin with that, which the difficulty of the text may first hint to us,—viz. that there are several passages in Scripture, which may be esteemed to a clean contrary construc-

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xlvii.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxiv. 15.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 16.



tion, may be taken in two senses, not only differing one from another, but directly contrary. I shall only instance in some, that I cannot but deal withal, as I have done with the words of the text,—viz. take them in a sense clean contrary to that sense, that commonly is put upon them.

The first I shall offer you is that, Gen. iv. 7; “If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” Who is there, that, reading or explaining this, doth not conclude it for a threatening? “If thou do not well, judgment is ready at doors to seize upon thee.” I cannot but, on the contrary, construe it for a comfort; and that ‘sin’ meaneth only a ‘sin-offering,’ as the word, in the original, is used a hundred times: and the very English word is so used once and again: as Hos. iv. 8, “They eat up the sin of my people,” that is, ‘their sin-offering;’—and 2 Cor. v. 21, “He hath made him sin for us,” i. e. ‘a sacrifice for sin.’—And the sense to be for the raising of Cain from dejectedness and despair, “If thou do well, there is undoubted acceptance; and if not, yet despair not, let not thy countenance fall; for there is a sin-offering to be had, that may heal all again, lying at the door: and, you know, in the law, the sacrifice was to be brought to the tabernacle-door<sup>e</sup>.

A second is that, Exod. i. 19: “The midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered, ere the midwives come in unto them.” How many, expounding that place, do roundly conclude, they told a lie to save their stake; when, as I suppose, it were no hard thing to show, that the thing they spake, was most true, that the Hebrew women in travail were so miraculously vigorous: and that their words are so far from a sneaking lie to save their lives, that they are a bold and holy confession of their faith and piety, to the hazard of their lives; that they saw so plain an evidence of the wonderful hand of God in that extraordinary vigour of the travail of the women,—that, do what Pharaoh would, they durst not, would not, stand or strive against it, because they would not strive against God.

A third is that Exod. viii. 19: “Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.” How many are there, that read and comment upon those words, that, without any scruple, conceive, that they are a fair and ingenuous

<sup>e</sup> Lev. i. 3, &c.



confession of the power and work of God ; whereas, I suppose, it were no hard thing to show, that they are a horrid blasphemy against the Lord ; they ascribing the miracle wrought to their Elohim, their unknown gods or deity, in scorn and affronting of the true God, the Jehovah of the Hebrews. “ This is the finger of Elohim ; this is not the finger of Jehovah.”

Let a fourth and last be that, Isa. ix. 1 : “ Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such, as was in her vexation, when, at the first, he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali ; and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles.” Who but takes these words, “ the dimness or affliction shall not be such,” to mean, it shall not be so great as was in her vexation, &c ? where it were not hard to show, that the meaning is, “ it shall be greater.” I spare more : these, with the text, are enough, in this head, to show and confirm,—That the style and difficulty of Scripture requires all sober and serious study of the Scripture.

II. A second head let be, passages in the New Testament directly contrary to the Old, as if the two Testaments were fallen out, and were not at unity among themselves. I will give you but five instances of these, as I did of the other.

1. Jechonias, Matt. i. 12, is said to beget Salathiel, whereas, Jer. xxii. 30, he is threatened with a witness (‘ O earth, earth,’ &c.), that he should be childless.

2. In Luke iii. 36, you have a Cainan the father of Shealah, or Sala, and son of Arphaxad ; whereas, Gen. x. 24, Arphaxad is the father of Shelah ; and there is no such man as Cainan to be found at all.

3. In Acts vii. 14, Jacob goes into Egypt with seventy-five ; whereas, in Exod. i. 5, you have them reckoned but seventy.

4. In the next verse but one, you have dead Jacob carried over into Shechem to be buried ; whereas, in Gen. l. 13, you have him carried over to Machpelah, before Mamre and Hebron, some scores of miles distant from Hebron.

5. And the same verse<sup>a</sup>, you have Abraham buying a burying-place of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem,—whereas, in the same verse in Genesis, and chap. xxiii, you have him buying it of Ephron the Hittite.

<sup>a</sup> Acts, vii. 16.



I spare more again; these are enow, in this head, also, to confirm what I say, and to show,—That the style and difficulty of Scripture requires all sober and serious study of Scripture.

III. A third head, let be the strange manner of accounting and reckoning of numbers, even in the Old Testament different from itself, as if that were not constant and consonant to itself. I shall give you some instances also of this head, a few amongst many.

1. In Josh. xiii. 3, the text is reckoning five lords of the Philistines, and it counts them, the Gazathites, Ashdothites, Eshkalonites, the Gittites, Ekronites, and Avites; it speaks of five, but reckons six.

2. In 2 Kings viii. 26: “Two-and-twenty years old is Ahaziah, when he began to reign; and reigned one year in Jerusalem;” but, in 2 Chron. xxii. 2, “Two-and-forty years old was Ahaziah, when he began to reign,” &c. And if you look well there, and compare his father’s age in the latter end of the chapter next before, you will find that he is made there two years older than his father.

Need I trouble you with any more instances to prove the difficulty of Scripture? I might give a thousand, some in chronology, some in chorography, some in language, some in sense. So that some have taken upon them to pick out some places in the Bible, which, they say, are past all possibility of interpreting or understanding.

But I may seem to have pleaded the Papist’s cause against the Scripture enough, and too much. But I am far from making the consequence and conclusion from the difficulties of Scripture, that they make. They say, the Scriptures are hard; therefore, let not the laity and unlearned meddle with them or read them at all. I say, The Scriptures are hard; therefore, let the laity and unlearned read and study them the more. And I need not fetch a warrant of my argumentation from any rule of Aristotle; for, behold, a greater than Aristotle is here, and sets me a copy,—and that is the Holy Ghost in the mouth of Joshua; Josh. xxiv. 19, “Ye cannot serve the Lord (saith Joshua): for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.” The pontifical inference, after the rate they infer about the difficulties of Scripture, would be this;—‘Therefore, let the serving of God alone; and go not



about to serve him at all:’ whereas, the inference the Holy Ghost aims at, is this, ‘Therefore, give the more diligence, and use the more care and endeavour, to serve him as ye should.’ The parallel, in the matter we are speaking of, will speak itself.

I shall not enter into any deep scholastic discourse, for the making of this inference good, upon which so many learned pens have made so many large discourses. I shall mention only some few demonstrations, which carry their own evidence in their forehead, and speak it plain to the most vulgar and meanest understanding.

I. It became the Holy Ghost, the penner of Scripture, to write in a majesty, that the wits and wisdom of all the men in the world should bow before it. ‘As is the man, so is his strength,’ do they say, Judg. viii. 21: and, as is the writer, so is his style and strength of writing. If Pericles, the orator at Athens, spoke lightning and thunder, as it was commonly said of him, because of the stateliness and awe of his oratory,—certainly, it is no wonder, if the great God of glory speak thunder and lightning out from mount Sinai. If the Holy Ghost wrote the Scriptures, we must needs conclude, that he wrote them like the Holy Ghost, in a divine majesty. Nor is it enough that we give to the Scriptures, if we should think only they were written for the benefit of men, if we do not think and consider also, that they were written in the demonstration of God. And however a blasphemous Jesuit durst be so daring as to take the Bible in his hand, and to say, “Thou Spirit, that, the Protestants say, breathest in these Scriptures, I defy thee;” yet we have better learned the Scriptures, and cannot but tremble at such blasphemy: but are no whit moved, by the boldness and confidence of it, the less to own and maintain, that the Holy Ghost, that gave the Scriptures, breatheth in the Scriptures in majesty and power; in power, to convert souls,—and in majesty, to confound confidence in man’s own wisdom.

We should look upon the majesty of Scripture,—viz. so as to bow to it, and not to make it bow to us. My meaning is not for any adoration to the book or papers, wherein Scripture is written, as the Jews keep a great deal ado with the very book of the law, little short of adoration; but to bow to that divine wisdom and authority, that shineth there.



That remarkable passage of the apostle hath been observed by many, as it is very observable, Rom. vi. 17: "You have obeyed, from the heart, that form of doctrine, whereto you were delivered;" as the original Greek carries it; and so some of your margins give intimation: whereas, in the text, it is, "which was delivered to you." The Scripture is delivered to us so, as we rather are delivered up to Scripture: much like the same apostle's expression in another place, and another case, Phil. iii. 12; "I apprehend, but am apprehended." We are delivered up to the Scriptures, as they are to be our masters, and not we theirs. As another apostle's expression is, "We are to be doers of the law, and not judges;" to be the students of the Scriptures, doers of the Scriptures, not their judges.

You know who say, "I will not believe the Scriptures for themselves, unless they could show their own authority: let them show me in Scripture, where the Scripture tells, that all the books in the Bible are Scripture; where it is said,—Such a book was written by such a penman; or else, how should I believe that all the Bible is Scripture? How should I believe, that the books were written by such and such penmen?" Let them choose, whether they will believe it or no, may God say, but at their own peril.—He never intended to satisfy every man's curiosity, and crossness, and cavilling; but he hath given the Scripture in authority and majesty; and if men will bow and submit to it, well and good; and if they will not, let them see how they will answer it another day. If a prisoner at the bar should not own the authority of that venerable peer, to judge him, unless he should particularly fetch out his commission and show it him, what would you call such peevishness,—madness, or impudency,—or both,—or worse. The application is easy enough.

II. Difficulties and things hard to be understood in Scripture, is one part of the majesticness of Scripture; and it is good to judge of such difficulties aright. One, once reading the crabbed and most obscure poet Persius, and not being able, with all his study and endeavour, to make sense of him,—he flung him away with this saying, "Quoniam non vis intelligi:—because thou hast written so, as if thou resolvedst not to be understood, I am resolved not to be at pains and study to understand thee." Are the difficulties of Scripture of this nature? Are they the resolved purposes



and purposed resolutions of the Holy Ghost, not to be understood? Did he write them intentionally, that men should never come to know the meaning of them? If this were so, the inference of the Papists were 'eousque' something reasonable,—‘Therefore, meddle not with them, for they are insuperable:’ but it is no such thing; for the difficulties of Scripture are of another end and intention. And let us consider of them briefly, in these two or three particulars:—

1. Though we say, ‘There are difficulties in Scripture,’ yet we dare not say, ‘The Scriptures are difficult.’ Peter<sup>e</sup> saith, “Some things in Paul’s Epistles are hard to be understood:” he will not say, “Paul’s Epistles are hard.” The Holy Bible is like the holy land: some part, indeed, mountainous and rocky, and hard to be travelled over; but the greatest part, pleasant, plain, champaign, and valley. Like any clean beast or fowl that might be eaten,—some bones, but the far greatest part flesh. Now, it were but a mad kind of inference,—Never go about to eat the flesh, because thou canst not eat the bones.

Men, indeed, have made an obscure Bible, but God never did. As Solomon speaks, “God made man righteous, but they found out sundry inventions:” so God made the Bible plain, as to the main of it; but men have found out inventions of allegorizing, scepticizing, cavilling, that would turn light into darkness, but that “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not.”—“That which God hath sanctified, do not thou call common;” and that, which God hath made plain, do not thou darken; nay, do not thou say, It is dark. How plain, as to the general, is the history in Scripture! How plain the commands, exhortations, threatenings, promises, comforts, that are written there! Take a sunbeam and write: and is it possible to write clearer? And what! must not the laity and unlearned meddle with Scripture, because it is too obscure? I doubt their meaning indeed is, Because it is too clear, and will discover too much.

2. These difficulties, that are in Scripture, which indeed are not a few,—are not a ‘noli me tangere,’ to drive us from the study of the Scriptures, as the inference would be made,—but they are of another kind of aim and tendency. They



are not unriddleable riddles and tiring-irons, never to be untied, but they are divine and majestic sublimities; not to check our study of Scripture or of them, but to check our self-confidence of our own wit or wisdom. They are not to drive us from the holy ground, where God shines in majesty in the flaming bush,—but to teach us, to put off our shoes at the holy ground: not to stand upon our own skill or wisdom, but to strike sail to the divine wisdom and mysteriousness that shineth there: not to dishearten us from study of the mysteries of God, but to teach us, in all humility, to study them the more. That obscure passage, Dan. ix. 27, about “the abomination of desolation;”—is not, that, for the obscurity, we should cast away the book, not meddle with it, but that we might read and study the more pressly, that we may understand<sup>f</sup>.

It is true, that God never intended, that all men in the world should understand Scripture alike; nor, that all men in the world should be able to study the Scriptures alike, or have opportunities to do it: yet these two things we may observe as to God’s will and disposing in this case:—

I. That God would have all to study and meditate on the Scriptures, according to their capacities: the Scriptures do so frequently and urgently call upon all to this purpose, that, I suppose, it is altogether needless to go about to prove it. “Thou shalt meditate therein day and night: thou shalt meditate therein, when thou sittest down and risest up, when thou sittest in the house, when thou walkest in the way:” and various such passages as these, require and engage all sorts and conditions of people to this study and meditation, according to their several capabilities and achievances.

In some important points of divinity, some men have sometimes mistaken, in stating them by men’s benefit rather than by their duty. If you did so in this point, it would make one very good piece of an argument; ‘Study the Scriptures, for you may benefit by study of them:’ but take the other, and it argueth more strongly,—‘Study the Scripture, for it is your duty: God calls for it,—lays his command upon you, to do it the best you can.’

II. Therefore, upon this we may make such another inference as Samson’s mother doth, Judg. xiii. 23: “If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have accepted an

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxiv. 15.



offering, neither would he have showed us all these things." If the Lord were pleased, that the Scriptures should not be understood,—he would never have written them, he would never have charged all to study them. God never writ the difficulties of the Scripture only to be gazed upon and never understood: never gave them as a book sealed, and that could never be unsealed, that learned and unlearned alike might never see what is in them,—but that they might be more seriously read, more carefully studied; that so, being understood and practised, they might become the means of salvation unto all.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

DAN. XII. 12, 13.

*Blessed is he, that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five-and-thirty days.*

*But go thou thy way till the end; for thou shalt rest, and stand in the lot at the end of days.*

**D**OETH he not speak riddles? It is hard to tell whether verse is harder. And I have chosen to speak to them,—partly, that I may explain them,—partly, in subsequence to my late discourse about Gog, Rev. xx. 8. I showed that meant an enemy to true religion (and more particularly the pope), styled by the name of ‘the old enemy,’ Ezek. xxxviii, and xxxix. I showed, that Gog was Antiochus, that laid waste the Jews’ religion, and would force them to turn to the manners of the heathen; that forbade them circumcision, law, religion; forbade the daily sacrifice, and profaned the altar with swine’s flesh, and sacrifices abominable and offered to idols. I cited that, that speaks concerning him, Dan. vii. 25, “He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, &c, until a time and times, and the dividing of time:” that is, a year, two years, and half a year; or, three years and a half.

In the verse before the text, there is mention of the same matter, and there are reckoned only a ‘thousand two hundred and ninety’ days:—“From the time, that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” For the Holy Ghost reckons by round sums, near about three years and a half, which he calls a ‘time, times, and half a time;’ and does not punctually fix upon the very exact sum. And so, in the book of the Revelation, where allusion is made to the same space of time,—viz. ‘three years and a half,’ it is sometimes expressed by a ‘thousand two hundred and sixty days;’ as Rev. xii. 6, “The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there, a thousand

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1247.



two hundred and threescore days.” Sometimes, by ‘ forty-two months;’ chap. xiii. 5, “ And there was given to the beast, a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given him to continue forty-and-two months.”—You have both in chap. xi. 2; “ They that tread the holy city under foot, forty-and-two months.”—And, ver. 3; “ I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

Now, let your thoughts conceive the case and state of the people and temple in this time, a thousand two hundred and ninety days, three years and a half, or thereabouts; no law, no religion, no sacrifice, but what is abominable; the temple filled with idols; the heathen there sacrificing swine’s flesh, and other abominable things to their abominable gods. Ah! poor Jerusalem, what case art thou in! ‘ How is the gold become dim,’ nay, changed to dross! What desolation of religion is come upon thee, and what bondage and thralldom under irreligion! How it goes against their heart, not to circumcise their children! But they dare not do it. How grievous, to see the books of the law burnt,—and they, upon pain of death, dare not save them, nor use them! How bitter to see altar, temple, holy of holies, all defiled with abomination, and all religion laid in the dust,—and they cannot help it, dare not resist it! What should these poor people do? Wait God’s deliverance: for ‘ Hæc non durabunt in secula,’ ‘ These things will not always last.’ Stay but till ‘ one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days;’ but ‘ forty-five’ above the ‘ thousand two hundred and ninety’ of the temple’s defilement in the verse before; and there is deliverance.

And read two verses together. “ From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate, set up,—there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five-and-thirty days.” Add but ‘ forty-five’ days farther, the sum to come up to a ‘ thousand three hundred and thirty-five’ days, and there is some remarkable thing done; as pleading the cause of the people and religion, that had been so abused: which, in all probability, was the death of the tyrant, that had brought this misery upon them: or, at least, some signal thing done by God, for the relief of the people, who had



been so oppressed. But I rather believe the former. The story of whose actions and death, you may read in the first book of the Maccabees, chap. i, beginning. The story of which book, goes almost step by step with Josephus. However, his death was the mercy, or some other special providence, the words afford plainly these two truths:—

I. That the time of the affliction of the people of God, is determined with God.

II. That it is a blessed thing for the afflicted, to wait his time and determination.

The former observation lies in the latter clause,—the latter, in the former. The two things, the latter an inference upon the former,—or the former, a doctrine,—the latter, the use and application of it,—I shall handle in the same method and order. The time of the affliction of the people of God is determined with God; therefore, it will prove a blessed thing for the afflicted, to wait his time and determination.

In prosecuting either, I shall not so much prove as clear them; and to begin with the former, I must begin with clearing a scruple, or objection, or discouragement.

It is true, will an afflicted people and person say, that, in the times of the Old Testament, God did determine the time of his people's affliction; but we can find no such determination now. The affliction in Egypt, was determined to 'four hundred' years<sup>b</sup>; and though the time were long, yet they knew, when it would expire; and there might be the more patient bearing, because the end was known, and the end would come. So, for their wandering in the wilderness, God told them before, that it should be 'forty years;' and they might the more contentedly bear it, because they saw some shore, and knew that that calamity would last but to such a time. So the affliction upon Judah, by Israel or Ephraim, it was told beforehand, that it should last so long, and no longer<sup>c</sup>; "Within threescore and five years, shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people." What need I speak of the captivity in Babylon, told of before, and limited to 'seventy years,' and no longer? And these miseries of the people in the text, it is told them before, that they should expire at the end of 'a thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.'

But now there is no such prediction, no such limitation,

<sup>b</sup> Gen. xv. 13.

<sup>c</sup> Isa. vii. 8.



that men can know of. Poor afflicted Christians may take up that mournful ditty<sup>d</sup>, "There is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any, that knoweth how long." We are afflicted, oppressed, trodden under foot; and we cannot tell, when these things will come to an end. "How long, Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood," &c? is their cry, Rev. vi. 10. But they cannot tell, how long that 'how long' will be. Is not this some disadvantage to poor Christians above what those had in ancient times, that God hath not, doth not, certify them, beforehand, of the end of their calamities? Their case seeming something like theirs, Isa. lix. 10, 11; "We grope for the wall, like the blind; we grope, as if we had no eyes. We roar like bears, and mourn sore like doves; we look for salvation, but cannot discover, how far it is from us."

I shall not insist to discuss, why God gave that people of Israel such revelations, beforehand, of the term and date of their miseries, and hath not imparted such forehand discoveries to his people now. It is enough to say, as the apostle, "These things were done to them, and are written before us for our learning:" that since he is the same God still, that changeth not, and hath the same regard of the afflictions of his own people yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever; we might believe and be assured, that the affliction of his people is determined now with him, as well as then; that he sets his period now, as well as then; that he numbers the days of it now, as he does theirs in the text.

But what am I the better as to my comfort, if I know not when this period, date, and time, is set?

I remember the story of him, that, carrying a basket covered very close, and being asked, what was in it? answered, 'It is covered so close, purposely that none should ask or know what is in it.' And I remember withal, the saying of our Saviour<sup>e</sup>, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." That was spoken, in the beginning of the going-forth of the gospel, and may very well be taken notice of in all ages after.

It pleased God so to reveal the term and end of Israel's affliction to them, as being a peculiar people, and a people of whom Christ should at last descend, and they not fail from being a people, till Christ was come of them. Therefore,

<sup>d</sup> Psal. lxxiv. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Acts, i. 7.



when such calamities came upon them, it pleased God to tell them still of the end of them, that they might still bear up in their subsistence and expectation of Christ to come. Let me observe these two things to you:—

I. That you have some old women, and barren till old, bare children in some generations before Christ: Elisabeth, in the very half year before Christ's birth; but you read of no such thing after. The reason whereof is, because their supernatural child-bearing was to make way to the belief of the supernatural child-bearing of the Virgin Mary. For thus may reason justly argue: 'If these bear children, when past the course of nature, why not a virgin beyond the course of nature?' But, after the birth of Christ, such births of old women ceased; because, in the birth of Christ, that which they related to, was fulfilled.

II. That the Holy Ghost draws up a chronicle of times from the creation to the redemption, from the beginning of time to the fulness of it,—viz. from the beginning of the world to the death of Christ; and there he leaves and counts the time no farther, save only that he mentions Pentecost fifty days after. The reason whereof is, because, by links and links of time, God would draw men on to observe, how God was numbering and counting out times, towards that great time of promise and expectation, and to observe, when that great matter was accomplished,—how faithful God was, through all changes and vicissitudes of times, to carry on that great promise. Accordingly, it pleased God, in the time before that great work of redemption, to certify his people oft, when they fell into misery, nay, oft before, how long the time of their affliction and oppression should be; that still they might be carried on to look for deliverance: and, by the deliverance, might still have an eye to the promise, and be confirmed in the promise, concerning deliverance by Christ.

So Jacob foreseeing, in Gen. xlix. 17, the great deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, by Samson, of the tribe of Dan, that "he should be as a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path, that bites the horse-heels, that he throws his rider:" so he caught the heels of the Philistines' horse, the posts of the house on which they were mounted, and overthrew house and riders, even three thousand:—I say, Jacob, foreseeing this, presently cries out, ver. 18, "O Lord,



I have waited for thy salvation." His eyes look beyond that deliverance of Samson, to the deliverance or salvation of Christ; and, in the sight of that type, his belief of that greater matter signified is confirmed. So in this very thing we are speaking of: till Christ came, God very frequently acquainted his people, beforehand, of what times were to come upon them,—what miseries,—what deliverances,—what oppressions,—what deliverance. Seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and then deliverance: three years and a half oppression under Antiochus, and then deliverance; and so in other examples: that still, in their afflictions, their hearts might be held up patiently to wait God's time of deliverance: and the deliverance answering and verifying the promise of deliverance, they might be built up in belief and expectation of the truth of the promise of the great Deliverer, when he should come.

But when Christ was come, and had done that great work; and there being now no such peculiar people to be borne up in hope of their subsistence, till Christ should descend of them; but the church of God being scattered through the world, and Christ having sanctified the bearing of the cross to them by his own bearing it, and having allotted the cross to them for their portion, and assured them<sup>f</sup>, that "they should not be tempted above what they were able; but that, with the temptation, he would make way to escape, that they might be able to bear it:"—

First, It cannot be imagined, that every particular church in the world should be acquainted with what persecutions and afflictions should come upon them, and how long they should last, and when they should be removed; as God was pleased to acquaint that peculiar church. Nor,

Secondly, Is it requisite, that God should punctually and exactly tell them the end of their persecution and affliction; but that they should always be kept to their duty, waiting, patience, and dependance. When Peter would be curious to inquire concerning what should become of John, Christ answers, "If I will, that he tarry till I come,—what is that to thee? follow thou me:" Look not thou at his end, but mind thou thine own duty.—So, if any people now should be inquisitive, "How long, Lord, and what, and when, will be the end of this calamity?"—God might justly answer, "It is

<sup>f</sup>1 Cor. x. 13.



not for you to know the times and the seasons ; but keep to your duty ; possess your souls in patience ; and wait to see the salvation of God in his own time and way." For let me repeat my doctrine again, and now come to clear it farther.

The time of the affliction of the people of God is determined with him.

He knows it, nay he hath set it.—For these two are the main things we shall speak to, in this point.

That no times, no men's times, are hidden from God, Job makes it a principle, as of which there is no questionings ; " Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they, that know him, not see his days ?" The latter half of the verse is of some scruple, and translations are various, and scrupulous upon it ; but the former is of no scruple, but of undoubted concession,—that ' times are, in no wise, hidden from God.' Only the botching Greek translation, which some would authorize above the divine Hebrew original, reads it clean contrary, " Why are times hidden from God ?" as if they were hidden from him. Point the latter clause right, as you should do (for, I observe, in some Bibles it is mispointed), and the passage is much cleared : " Why, since times, &c ; do they, that know him, not see his days ?" Or, ' not more consider of his eternity ?'

Dan. viii. 13 : There is a word something strange in the original ; פלמוני, the English text reads it, " That certain saint : " " Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto *that certain saint* that spake, How long shall be the vision ?" &c. But the margin reads it, ' The numberer of secrets,' or, ' the wonderful numberer.' His name is " Wonderful," Isa. ix. 6.—And, Judg. xiii. 18 ; " Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is *secret* ?" Margin, ' *Wonderful*.'—When he is now treating concerning times, he is called the ' wonderful numberer' of them. ' Mene, Mene, Tekel : ' he ' numbers' and he finishes the times of men and kingdoms : he ' weighs' men and their times, and their conditions. He is the ' wonderful numberer,' in whose hand, and knowledge, and disposal, are the times of all men : as David saith of his own<sup>h</sup>, " My times are in thy hand." Concerning God's knowing and dating the times of men, and their affairs, I might largely speak to these two things for evidence to it :—

<sup>s</sup> Job, xxiv. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Psal. xxxi. 15.



I. His foretelling of times and affairs before they come. By this very thing he proves himself to be the true God; and, by coming short of this, the gods of the heathen to be but lies and vanity, Isa. xli. 22, 23; “Let them bring forth, and show us what shall happen; let them declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.”—But, chap. xliii. 12, God saith of himself, “I have declared, and saved, and showed, when there was no strange god among you.”—And, chap. xlvi. 9, 10, “I am God; there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things, that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” How did he determine the time of the sojourning of the children of Israel, before their coming out of Egypt, four hundred and thirty years before, to the very day? Exod. xii. 40, 41; “Now, the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.” How did he foretell of the death of Christ, seventy sevens of years, even four hundred and ninety years, before it was, to the very hour? Dan. ix. 21: “At the hour of the evening sacrifice:” the angel Gabriel tells Daniel the time, to that very hour Christ should suffer; for he suffered at that hour. Is not the time of the affliction of his people determined with him, who foresees, foretells of times and affairs to a day, to an hour, so many hundreds of years before they come?

II. His harmonizing of times in so sweet a union as he hath done, doth not that show that he is the ‘wonderful numberer’ of times, and numberer of times of the affliction of his people? The Scripture is most copious, and the providence of God most sweet and heavenly, in this kind of concert; and it may much refresh and ravish the reader of Scripture to observe such harmony. Enoch<sup>i</sup>, that glorious shining light upon earth, to run his course here just in as many years, ‘three hundred sixty-five years,’ as the sun doth his course in heaven days, three hundred sixty-five days; David, to reign exactly so long a time in Jerusalem, as Christ, the son of David, lived here upon earth, “thirty-two years and a half<sup>k</sup>,” no

<sup>i</sup> Gen. v. 23.<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings, ii. 11.



rain in Elias's time, three years and a half<sup>l</sup>; Antiochus's desolating of religion, "three years and a half," in the verse before the text, and Christ's ministry to be "three years and a half<sup>m</sup>;" doth not this harmony tell, that God is the wonderful 'numberer' of time, and 'weigher' of all affairs?

Multitudes of such harmonies of times are to be found in Scripture: which all sound out this truth we are upon,—that, with God, the times of the afflictions and condition of his people are most certainly determined, because all times are determined by him.

For the farther clearing of this point, I might discourse distinctly of these two things:—

I. That it is God's determination, that his children shall be afflicted.

II. God's determining of their afflictions leaves not the time, they shall last, undetermined.

It is the latter of these I shall prosecute. The providence of God herein is not like the ostrich, that lays eggs, and leaves them in the sand; as if he determined of the thing, and left the time of its lasting at random; but he weigheth and setteth the one as well as the other. In "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," the two latter words are each of them two several languages. 'Tekel,' in Chaldee, is, 'He hath weighed:—' Tekel,' in Hebrew, 'Thou art light:—' Parsin,' in Hebrew, is the 'Persians;,' in Chaldee, 'They divide:—'and, accordingly, Daniel doth render them. So, in God's determination of the saints' affliction (as those words speak of God's determining that kingdom), there are two several providences,—viz. as to the thing itself, and as to the manner and time of it: these two are twins born together in God's decree; and, when he determines the one, he determines the other.

In those passages in the Revelation, where the church is in the wilderness, in a sad and solitary condition, a "thousand two hundred and sixty days<sup>n</sup>;" and where the beast blasphemes and tyrannizes 'forty-two months<sup>o</sup>;' though the time be not that time definitely, yet the very expressions show the times defined and determined with God. Allusion is made to the time of Antiochus's tyrannizing over religion, three years and a half: not as though the church was to be

<sup>l</sup> Luke, iv. 25.

<sup>m</sup> Dan. ix. 26.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. xii. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. xiii. 5.



bewildered three years and a half, and no more and no less ; but by using the memorial of that sum, of three years and a half, he speaks the sad condition of the church in that time it was in the wilderness, as the times under Antiochus were sad. And so concerning the beast's blaspheming,—it is not meant, as though he were to blaspheme, and tyrannize forty-two months exactly ; take them either of days, which make three years and a half,—or of years, a thousand two hundred and sixty years : but, by the memorial of the time of Antiochus's rage and mischief, the rage and mischief of the beast is intimated. So, I say, though the time intended be not exactly and punctually the time named,—yet, when so punctual a sum is named, it must needs argue, that the time intended is punctually determined with God.

But need I to spend time to prove this to them, that have learned, that “ not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father ;” and that “ the hairs of our heads are all numbered,” Matt. x. 29, 30 : which last passage puts me in mind of that, Luke xxi. 18, “ There shall not a hair of your head perish.” Observe ver. 16 ; “ Some of you they shall cause to be put to death ;” and yet, “ Not a hair of your head shall fall to the ground ; not a hair perish.” With many a saint of God, head and all have fallen to the ground, as it was with them<sup>p</sup>, “ that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus.” And yet, not a hair of their head perish ? Some expositors take this to have its accomplishment in the resurrection, ‘ when the saints (say they) shall rise with all their hair.’ Which granted, yet the exposition is far fetched. The expression is a proverbial speech, as appears by 1 Sam. xiv. 45 : “ Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel ? God forbid ; as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground.” The meaning is, ‘ he shall not suffer the least hurt or injury.’ And to apply it to that passage of our Saviour, it speaks this comfortable doctrine,—that “ the saints of God, in the bitterest persecution, yea, in death itself, suffer not the least hurt or damage.”

But, however, take it in what sense you will ; if our hairs be numbered, and it be promised, that not one of them shall fall to the ground,—then, undoubtedly, nothing befalls the saints, concerning affliction, fortuitous or by hap-hazard ;



but the thing, matter, manner, measure, time, of affliction, is determined by God.

“Is there not an appointed time for man on earth?”  
 “There is an appointed time for every man, which he shall not pass.” Be his end never so casual, accidental in the eyes of men, yet it is prefixed by God, and ‘he cannot pass it,’ or go beyond it. And can we think, any thing occurs to a saint of God, in the way to his end, that is not likewise fixed?

2 Job, vii. 1.

1 Job, xiv. 5.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

HEBREWS, x. 29.

*And hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing.*

THE whole verse runs thus, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall ye be thought worthy, that hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing,—and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” The spring-head of this verse is at ver. 26; and that bubbles out fire and brimstone. Not a more dreadful portion of Scripture, at the first reading and hearing, in all the Bible: a text which speaks, much like as the law was spoken, in fire and thunder. “If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” No sacrifice for sin, if any sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth; and nothing but fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation. If the ‘truth’ mean here ‘the gospel,’ as undoubtedly it doth,—then, men and brethren, what shall we do? Who hath not sinned wilfully, since he received the knowledge of the gospel? Nay, our English translation is as favourable as may be; for the word in the original is *ἐκουσίως*, ‘willingly:’ and that makes the case still sadder. For who hath not sinned willingly,—nay, who not wilfully, since he received the knowledge of the truth of the gospel, against knowledge, against truth, against the gospel?

That chirurgeon had need of a tender hand, that is to dress a wounded heart, gashed with the keen and cutting edge of this dreadful Scripture. If any heart should be darted through with this arrow of the Almighty, and that the reading or hearing this text wounds his heart to the very root:—as the story is, Origen’s heart, after his idolatry, was

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1252.



wounded with reading those words in Psal. l. 16, 17, "But to the wicked, God said, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or to take my covenant in thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?" So that, upon reading them, he sat down and wept, and all the congregation wept with him:—what could be said to the comfort of such a bleeding soul? Should a soul, wounded with these words of the apostle, cry out, as that prophet in another case, "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at the very heart, my liver is cut through as with a javelin," to hear that there is no sacrifice for his sin, that sinneth wilfully, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, and I have sinned so oft, and so wilfully, against that knowledge and truth as I have done:—What plaster, what lenitive, could be applied to allay the aching smart and torture of so sad a cut? As our Saviour, of the smarting and cutting days of affliction before the ruin of Jerusalem, "Except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved:" so, if there were no allay to the soreness of such a stroke and case, what flesh could but perish? But there is some allay, and that is this:

That the apostle speaks not of that common, willing, or wilful sinning, to which who is not incident at one time or other, in one degree or other?—but of a willing, wilful, total apostatizing, and revolting from the truth and gospel once professed and received. If you observe in the Epistles of the apostles, and in the story of the New Testament, you will find, that the very topping-up of the wickedness of the Jewish nation, and of their perdition, was this;—that as the unbelieving part of the nation, continued enemies to Christ and his gospel,—so those that had believed, did, by infinite numbers and droves, revolt and apostatize from what they had believed,—and became, if possible, worse enemies than the others; and drew as many of the believing Gentiles as they could, into the same apostasy and condemnation with themselves.

I might evidence this by instances, heaps upon heaps: and hardly any one of the apostolic Epistles but it is so plain in it, that he that runs, may read it. I shall only give you three passages instead of scores, that might be given.

First, Weigh that 1 John ii. 18: "Little children, it is the last time: and, as ye have heard that antichrist should come, even now there are many antichrists." And who



are they? ver. 19, "They went out from us, but were not of us." Once professors, and following the apostles,—now revolting, and fallen from them; once disciples,—and now apostates and antichrists.

Secondly, Who can pass that of the apostle without serious observing, 2 Tim. i. 15? "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia, are turned away from me." A sad apostasy! Ah, poor Paul! *all* turned away from thee? Where now hast thou any friend?—Nay, rather, ah, poor souls! ah, unhappy souls! that turned away from St. Paul, and the blessed gospel, that he brought with him.

Thirdly, and that for all: How sadly does our Saviour foretell this in the parable of the devil cast out of the possessed, but comes again with seven other spirits worse than himself, and repossesses. And observe the cadence at Matt. xii. 45; "Even so shall it be also with this wicked generation." The application is easy.

Of such apostasy it is the apostle speaks, at ver. 26, where he calls it, "wilful sinning, after receiving the knowledge of the truth." And of such an apostate he speaks in this verse, when he saith, "He hath trod under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." Many think, that the apostle speaks here of the sin against the Holy Ghost. I am sure he speaks of that 'sin unto death,' of which the apostle John hath mention, 1 John v. 16. Not but that the sin against the Holy Ghost is a sin unto death; but the 'sin unto death' may be distinguished from the 'sin against the Holy Ghost,' in this respect,—that the scribes and Pharisees, whom our Saviour layeth under the guilt of sinning against the Holy Ghost, never received the knowledge of the truth, and acknowledgment of the gospel. But this wretch, that sins this sin unto death, had received that knowledge; but was apostatized and revolted from it.

Their apostasy, or falling back from the truth, was into a twofold gulf. Some fell to horrible libertinism, to abuse the liberty of the gospel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication: of which you have intimation in several places of the Epistles, and particularly in Rev. ii. 14.

But the most general apostatizing was, from the true liberty of the gospel to the slavery of Judaism again, to seek justification by the works of the law. Against this you find



the apostles speaking copiously almost in all the Epistles; and particularly St. Paul, the penman of this Epistle (for I make no doubt at all to ascribe it to him), sets himself purposely to stay the Hebrews, to whom he writes, from staggering and falling into such apostasy. And you may observe, how, in the whole current of his discourse, he bends himself to show, that those Mosaic ceremonies and services, by which they thought and looked to be justified and saved, were but shadows, that did but signify greater things to come: but shadows, that were but for a time, and were to fade away.

The same subject, that he is upon at this portion of Scripture, he is handling in chap. vi. 4—6: where we may have an exposition of some words or passages in our text. ‘Receiving the knowledge of the truth,’ he calls there, ‘being enlightened,—tasting of the heavenly gift, of the good word of God, of the powers of the world to come.’—‘Sinning wilfully’ here, is ‘falling away’ there with him: and the fate and punishment of such a wretch here, is ‘no sacrifice for sin;’ there, in few words, ‘it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.’ His wickedness, in this verse, is threefold; and his judgment, in the verses before, threefold also:—

I. “He hath trodden under foot the Son of God.” For, as the apostasy generally was from the grace of the gospel to seek to be justified by their own works,—then, what need of Christ at all? What value is he of to such wretches, any more than the mire under their feet? As St. Paul, Acts xiv, was first accounted a god, then presently stoned;—so these wretches used Christ not much unlike. First, they professed him, embraced him, looked to be justified and saved by him; presently they looked to be justified by the works of the law, and cast away Christ, and scornfully trample upon him, as a thing altogether useless.

II. “He accounted the blood of the covenant a thing unholy,” or a thing *common*, as the Greek word most strictly signifies: not so holy, not so valuable, as the blood of goats and calves. For that blood was shed for something; but this wretch makes Christ’s blood shed for nothing. And, indeed, what was his blood shed for, if men can justify and save themselves?

III. “He hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace:” or,



hath reproached, despised, the Spirit of grace, and the grace of the Spirit. He is now revolted from that, and expects to be saved by his actings, and puts a scorn and reproach upon the Spirit of grace. A sad wretch! Look on him, look on his villany; and of how sore punishment do you think him worthy? The apostle reads his doom:—

I. That there is ‘no more sacrifice for his sin,’ to keep off vengeance, when he hath trod under foot the great sacrifice, and counts the blood of atonement but a ‘common’ thing.

II. That, that could not but follow, when there was no sacrifice for atonement; viz. “A fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation.”

III. That, that, at last, was to seize as sure, and sorer than the punishment of him, “that despised Moses’s law, who yet died without mercy.”

In the words that I have chosen to insist upon, which speaks the second part of this wretch’s villany, “He accounted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing;”—a great question is, Who is the *he*, that is here said to be sanctified? Doth it mean this wretch himself? He ever sanctified! Ever sanctified by the blood of the covenant, that he now so undervalues! I am not ignorant, what is disputed upon this case; which dispute I shall not take upon me to determine; but the sense of the place itself, I suppose, may be otherwise determined, without any great difficulty or dispute,—viz. that the *he*, here mentioned to be sanctified, is the Son of God, mentioned in the clause next preceding. And I should read the two clauses together to this sense,—“He hath trod under foot the Son, and hath accounted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he [the Son of God himself] was sanctified, an unholy thing.” And I am induced to believe, that this is the apostle’s meaning in this place, upon these two or three reasons:—

First, Because the same apostle hath much like such an expression in this very Epistle, chap. xiii. 20; where he saith, that God “brought Christ again from the dead, by the blood of the everlasting covenant.” Now, if it be proper to say, Christ was raised by the blood of the covenant, it is not improper to say, Christ was sanctified by the blood of the covenant. For,

Secondly, As the words, both in the original and your



English, do as fairly carry that sense, that I put upon them, in grammatical construction; so do they, in that sense, carry a most undeniable truth in theological doctrine,—“That Christ was sanctified by his own blood.” Not, indeed, as a saint of God is sanctified by the blood of Christ, who was once unholy, but, by it, now is made holy;—but as the word signifies to ‘separate,’ set apart, and capacitate, to a holy use or office. As Aaron is said to be sanctified by his clothes and unction, i. e. set apart, fitted, accomplished, for his office and priesthood; so Christ, ‘sanctified by the blood of the covenant,’ i. e. fitted, capacitated, to be perfect Mediator. And so,

Thirdly, The apostle, that he may aggravate the sin of this wretch, that he is speaking of,—doth enhance the blood of the covenant by the highest dignity and excellency, that is possible to entitle it to. This wretch accounts it an ‘unholy,’ common, trivial thing: whereas the Son of God himself was ‘sanctified’ by it, by it capacitated and fitted to be a perfect Redeemer: a “high-priest, who, by his own blood, entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

I shall not be urgent with any to entertain and espouse this construction, that I make of the words. If the fairness and probability of the sense I propose, will not speak and plead for it,—let it alone, and remember that of the apostle, “Prove all things; hold fast that that is good.”

But that, that I shall insist upon, shall be to consider of the meaning of ‘the blood of the covenant.’ And, in our consideration of that, we shall see the infinite preciousness and value of that blood, which yet the wretch, in the text, doth so undervalue, that he accounts it but unholy and common: and there are but too few, too few, that value it at its proper rate. I need not tell among Christians, that ‘the blood of the covenant’ means the blood of Christ, of which such glorious things are spoken in Scripture,—viz. that we are ‘washed,’ ‘redeemed,’ ‘justified,’ ‘saved,’ by his blood, the blood of the everlasting covenant. And this very intimation parts our discourse into two branches,—viz. to consider it as the blood of Christ;—and to consider the blood of Christ as the blood of the covenant.

It is observed by a pious pen, how malice cankers things, where it comes. For those words, “Sanguis ejus super



nos," &c. "His blood be upon us and our children," spoken in a right Christian pious sense, speaks a thing, that a more excellent, happy, and desirable cannot be prayed for;—viz. the blood of Christ to be upon us, and upon ours, as it is upon all true believers, to wash, cleanse, justify, save. But in their cursed, cankered sense, the nation finds it, to this day, their direful and doleful infelicity, that the blood of Christ is upon them, as they wished. So there is much spoken, and much of comfort spoken, concerning the sprinkling of Christ's blood; and the sprinkling of his blood, in that Scripture-sense, brings all happiness with it. But take it according to the bare letter, there is no such thing; nay, there is the contrary, in some respect. Take his 'blood' barely to mean 'that substance of his blood,' that issued from his wounds, as he hung upon the cross; and some of it was sprinkled upon the cross, and some of it ran upon the ground: and what happiness either to the cross, or ground, from such sprinkling? Nay, some of it was sprinkled and dashed upon his murderers; and proved so little happiness to them, that it made them the more unhappy, nay, the most unhappy men under heaven.

Therefore, as the Scripture saith, "The life is in the blood,"—so are we to look for something besides the bare substance of his blood, that flowed from him, and besides the bare flowing of his blood from him; something that was as the life of that blood, that gave it the vigour, virtue, and efficacy, of justifying and saving. And what was that? You will say, His infinite 'sufferings;' let me add, His infinite 'obedience:' in both which is included, the supposal of the 'dignity of his person;' and the whole is spoken.

I shall not much insist upon his sufferings, because his obedience to those sufferings was the life of those sufferings, the very life of his death, as I may so phrase it, and that, the dignity of his person computed in, that gave virtue, vigour, efficacy, to his sufferings, death, and blood.

Of his sufferings, I shall only say thus much; 'That he suffered as much as God could put him to suffer, short of his own wrath; and that he suffered as much as the devil could put him to, with all his wrath.' You will say, I speak too high, when I say, 'He suffered as much as God could put him to suffer;' and that I speak too low, when I say, 'short of his own wrath.' I dare not say, 'He suffered



the *wrath* of God,' as many do ; but the prophets and apostles teach me, that he suffered the *tryings* of God. And more he could not be put to suffer, than what he did. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief;" Isa. liii. 10. And more could not be laid upon him, than what was laid. Have you seriously weighed the meaning of those words of our Saviour himself<sup>b</sup>, "This is your hour, and power of darkness?" The plain English of it is, "'This is your hour,' that God hath let you loose upon me, to do with me, what you will, without restraint: and so hath he let loose upon me the kingdom of darkness in its utmost power, at the full length of the chain, to do against me the utmost it can do. I was daily with you in the temple, and ye stretched out no hands against me: for then providence restrained them, because the hour was not yet come. But 'this is your hour;' and now hell, and all its power, and all its agents, are let loose against me! and providence does not check them with any restraint."

I might insist to show you, that, whereas God, from the day of Adam's fall, had pitched a combat and field, to be fought betwixt the serpent and the seed of the woman, in which the 'serpent should bruise his heel,' and he 'break the serpent's head;'—the hour of that encounter being now come, the Godhead of Christ suspends its acting; the providence of God suspends its restraining, and lets Satan loose to do the utmost of his power and malice, and leaves Christ to stand upon the strength of his own unconquerable holiness. The providence of God hath the devil in a chain, yea, as to wicked and ungodly men. Else, why are they not carried bodily to hell by him? Why are they not hurried to their own place by him, body and soul together? But here God let the chain quite loose; 'Satan, do thy worst against him; use all thy power, rage, and malice.'—But all would not do; for God very well knew, what a champion he had brought into the field to encounter him. And, therefore, I may very well say it again, 'That God put him to suffer as much, as he could put him to suffer on this side his own wrath; and the devil put him to suffer as much, as he could do with all his rage and power.'

But his sufferings were not all, that gave his blood and death that virtue, that most justly is ascribed to it, of justify-

<sup>b</sup> Luke, xxii. 53.



ing and saving. The torments that he suffered, were not the godfather, that named his blood by that precious name of justifying and saving; but it was that infinite *obedience*, that he showed in bowing so low as to undergo those sufferings. And there especially does the Scripture lay and lodge the stress of it; “By the *obedience* of one, shall many be made righteous<sup>c</sup>:”—“He humbled himself, and became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross<sup>d</sup>:”—“Though he were a Son, yet learned he *obedience* by the things which he suffered<sup>e</sup>.”

Our Saviour, in his sufferings and death [for to that I will confine my discourse concerning his obedience, as the text confines us to treat only of his blood, and as the Scripture more peculiarly lodges his obedience there. For, though he performed obedience to God all his life, yet the obedience that he showed to, and in, the shedding of his blood,—was the very apex and top-stone of his obedience. And for this it is, that I scruple to say, that he suffered the *wrath* of God in his sufferings; because it is hard to think, that he lay under the depth of God’s displeasure, when he was now in the highest pitch of obeying and pleasing God]: I say, that our Saviour, in his sufferings and death, had to deal with God and Satan, upon different accounts; with God, to satisfy him,—with Satan, to destroy him. And with one and the same instrument, as I may call it,—his *obedience*, he effected these contrary effects. As the pillar of fire<sup>f</sup> was darkness to the Egyptians, but light to Israel,—so his *obedience* was destruction to the devil, and satisfaction to God.

I. Christ was to break the head of the serpent, as the serpent had broke the head of Adam and all mankind. He was to conquer the devil, who had conquered man. And what was that, by which he conquered him? By his divine power, as he was God? That had been no great mastery; for the great God, by his omnipotent power, to conquer a creature. When he did but exert a little of his divine power at his apprehension, he made Judas, and all his band of ruffians, to “go backward, and fall to the ground<sup>g</sup>.” But he was to conquer Satan by righteousness, holiness, and obedience to God. He had not needed to have been incar-

<sup>c</sup> Rom. v. 19.<sup>d</sup> Phil. ii. 8.<sup>e</sup> Heb. v. 8.<sup>f</sup> Exod. xv.<sup>g</sup> John, xviii. 6.



nate, to conquer the devil by his omnipotent divine power ; but he was to conquer him, and he did conquer him, by obedience and holiness.

John xiv. 30 : “ The prince of this world cometh, saith he, and hath nothing in me.” And he came with all his forces, all his fury, all his power ; and do all he could, he could find nothing in him, that could serve his turn. All that he did, or could do, could not move him one hair’s-breadth from obeying God, and persisting in his holiness. The apostle, in the ninth of this Epistle, ver. 14, saith, “ He offered himself *without spot* to God.” One spot had spoiled all the offering ; but the devil could not fix one spot upon him, though he flung against him all the sink of hell : but still he keeps to his obedience and holiness. “ Vicisti, Galilæe ;” Julian, a child of the devil, once said, “ O Galilean ! thou hast overcome me.” The devil, himself, hath cause to say so now. The devil let loose upon him, to do the utmost against him that he could, without any restraint, to bring him from his obeying of God, and so to foil him ; and all will not do. All the temptations, and tricks, and assaults, that the anvil of hell could forge and sharpen, were bent and used against him, and all return blunted, and avail nothing. All that Satan can do, cannot bring from him one repining word for all his tortures ; not one desponding thought, for all his pangs ; not one unbecoming passage, for all his passion. But still he will obey God, come what will ; he will still retain his holiness and integrity, let devils and men do what they will.

Satan, art thou not conquered ? O devil, where is thy power now ? O hell, where is thy victory ? Thanks be given to God, that hath given us such victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Satan, thou hast not the first Adam now in handling, who was foiled by one devil ; and, in one and the first temptation, presented to him. Now, all the power and army of hell is let loose ; all the machinations of the bottomless pit put in practice against the second Adam ; but all to no purpose : he stands, like a rock, unmoved in his righteousness and obedience, and, by such a “ death, destroys him, that had the power over death, the devil.”

II. As the devil must be conquered, so God must be satisfied. And, as Christ’s obedience did the one work, so it did the other. Obedience was the debt of Adam and man-



kind; and, by disobedience, they had forfeited their bonds. Then comes this great undertaker, and will satisfy the debt with full interest, yea, and measure heaped and running over. Does not the apostle speak thus much, Rom. v. from ver. 12 forward; particularly at ver. 19; "As by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners,—so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous?"

Nor was this all, that *man's debt* must be paid; but *God's honour* lay at stake too, and that must be vindicated. God had created man his noblest creature, that he might glorify and honour his Creator by his obedience; Satan brings him to disobey his Creator, and to obey him. How might Satan here triumph, and the honour of God lie in the dust! "I have mastered the chief creation of God (might Satan boast), and made him that carried the badge and livery of *his* image, now to carry *mine*. I have frustrated the end and honour of the Creator, and now all is mine own." How sad a time were those three hours, or thereabouts, that passed betwixt the fall of Adam, and the promise of Christ!

Adam in darkness, and not the least glimpse of promise or comfort; Satan triumphing, and poor mankind and God's honour trampled under foot. But then the Sun of righteousness arose in the promise, "that the seed of the woman should break the head of the serpent." And "shall this uncircumcised Philistine thus defy the honour and armies of the living God (saith Christ); shall Satan thus carry the day against man, and against God? I will pay obedience, that shall fully satisfy to the vindication of God's honour, to confound Satan,—and to the payment of man's debt, to his reinstating and recovery."

And that was it, that he paid consummatively in his obedience to the death, and in it, and to the shedding of his blood. Of which to speak in the full dimensions of the height, depth, length, breadth, of it,—what tongue can suffice, what time can serve? It is a theme, the glorified saints deservedly sing of to all eternity. I shall speak, in little, of that, which can never be extolled enough, these two things only:—

I. That "he died merely out of obedience." The apostle tells us, in Phil. ii. 8, "He became obedient to the death, the death of the cross." And what can ye name, that brought him thither but obedience? Christ's dead body,



imagine, lies before you. Call together a whole college of physicians to dissect it, and to tell you, what it was, of which he died. And their verdict will be, "Of nothing, but love to man, and obedience to God." For principles of death, he had none in his nature: and the reason of his death lay not in any mortality of his body, as it does in ours, but in the willingness of his mind. Nor was his death his wages of sin, as it is ours<sup>h</sup>; but it was his choice and delight<sup>i</sup>; "I have a baptism to be baptized withal; and how am I straitened, till it be accomplished!" Ask the first Adam, Why he sinned, when he had no principles of sin in him? and the true answer must be, "Because he would sin."—And so ask the second Adam, Why he died, when he had no principles of death in him? his answer must be to the like tenor,—He would lay down his life, because he would be obedient to the death.

He came purposely into the world, that he might die. Behold! I tell you a mystery: Christ came purposely into the world, that he might die; and so never did man but himself; never will man do, but himself. True, that every man that comes into the world, must die; but never man came purposely, that he might die, but only he. And he saith no less than that he did so, John xii. 27; "Father, save me from this hour: but, for this cause, came I to this hour."—And John xviii. 37; "For this cause came I into this world, to bear witness to the truth." Even to bear witness to the truth, to death, and martyrdom.

II. Now, add to all this 'the dignity of his person,' who performed this obedience: that he was God as well as man: that, as he offered himself according to his manhood,—so he "offered himself by the eternal Spirit," or as he was God; as this apostle saith, chap. ix. 14. And now his obedience, his holiness, that he showed in his death, is infinite. And what need we say more? So that lay all the disobedience of all men in the world on a heap, as the dead frogs in Egypt were laid on heaps, that they made the land to stink again;—yet here is an obedience, that outvies them all. For, though they be infinite in number, as to man's numbering, yet, lay them all together, they are finite upon this account, because committed by creatures finite. But here is an obedience, a holiness, paid down, by him that is infinite.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. vi. 23.

<sup>i</sup> Luke, xii. 50.



And now, Satan, where is thy triumph? Thou broughtest the first Adam to fail of—perfect obedience,—that he should have paid his Creator: and here the second Adam hath paid him for it—infinite obedience.—And what hast thou now gained?

Therefore, to take account, from whence comes that infinite virtue of Christ's blood and death, that the Scripture so much and so deservedly extols and magnifies;—because, as the evangelist saith, “Out of his side came water and blood,”—so, out of his wounds came obedience and blood, holiness and blood, righteousness and blood; and that obedience, holiness, righteousness, infinite: because he, that paid it down and performed it, was infinite.

And now judge, whether it may not very properly be said, that “Christ was sanctified by his own blood?” As Aaron was sanctified for his priesthood, by his unction and garments,—Christ was consecrated, fitted, capacitated, by his infinite obedience and righteousness, which he showed to the death, and in it, to be a high-priest, “able to save to the uttermost all those, that come to him.”

For, first, as in reference to himself, it is said, by this apostle, that he was “raised from the dead by the blood of the covenant,” chap. xiii. 20. And it was not possible, but he should be raised: for when he had performed such obedience and righteousness, as was infinite,—in its validity, subdued Satan,—in its all-sufficiency, satisfied the justice of God,—it was impossible that he should be held of death, which is the wages of sin and disobedience. And, as he was thus raised by the virtue of his blood, i. e. of his obedience and righteousness,—so, see what the same apostle saith of his exaltation, Phil. ii. 8, &c; “And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow,” &c.

And think here, Christian, what a stock of obedience and righteousness here is for thee, to answer and satisfy for thy disobedience and unrighteousness, if thou become a child of the covenant, as this blood was the blood of the covenant. It is said, in Dan. ix. 26, that “Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself.” This blood of the New Testament was



not shed for himself, but *for many*." And here is enough for every soul, that comes to him, be they never so many: like the widow's oil in the Book of the Kings, there is enough and enough again, as long as any vessel is brought to receive it.

And this may direct us towards the forming of the reliance of our faith upon the blood of Christ, the great work that a Christian hath to do for his justification and salvation. Which will be the more cleared to us, by considering how his blood is the blood of the covenant:—which is the next thing we should speak to, had we time to do it.



# A SERMON,

PREACHED UPON

HEBREWS, XIII. 10.

*We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat,  
which serve the tabernacle.*

THERE is one that asks our Saviour, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life<sup>b</sup>?” And another, that asks his great apostle, “What must I do to be saved<sup>c</sup>?” The questions mean one and the same thing, but only proposed in different expressions. And the answers tend to one and the same purpose, though proposed in terms very different. Our Saviour answers, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”—The apostle answers, “If thou wilt be saved, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” The one proposeth ‘faith;’ the other proposeth good works; not in such contrariety, as the apostle James<sup>d</sup> speaks of faith and works, but in such consonancy, as that the one is subservient unto the other; keeping of the commandments towards the bringing on of faith,—and faith to the breeding and forwarding the keeping of the commandments,—and both to obtain eternal life.

I will speak, at present, of the absolute necessity of faith, for the obtaining eternal life; and, therefore, have I chosen these words, which I have read to you, which seem, at first sight, to be mere strangers to such a subject; but, when explained and rightly understood, are very pertinent to such a matter. I say, ‘rightly understood;’ for there are many, the Popish expositors especially, that understand them exceedingly wrong, and as far from the apostle’s meaning, as likely can be.

By “we have an altar,” they understand the altar in their churches,—viz. the table where they administer the sacrament, and thence they call the sacrament, “the sacrament of the altar:”—a title, that hath been too common in England, and which hath cost many a good man very dear:—

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1259.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xix. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Acts, xvi. 30.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. iii.



the Lord grant, the title be never known here any more! But the title of the altar is commonly known among us still; and ask many why they call it an 'altar,' they will be ready to produce this place of the apostle, "we have an altar."—As if the apostle,—who had been crying down the service and sacrifices of the altar all along this Epistle, and showed that they were but shadows, and to vanish when the substance appeared,—should set them up again; and build up anew, what he had so earnestly set himself to destroy. As if Gideon, that destroyed the altar of Baal in the night, should fall a-work in the morning, and build it up again.

But the 'altar,' in the apostle's meaning here, is 'Christ' himself. And, as he had called him a 'high-priest,' and a 'sacrifice,' along in the Epistle before,—so he calls him, also, the 'altar' here; showing, that all those things did but represent him, and that he was the substance and reality of those shadows. He shows, how he was the great high-priest, in the latter end of the fourth, and along the fifth, chapter. He shows, how he was the great sacrifice, in the ninth and tenth chapters; and how he was the great altar, he shows at this place, "we have an altar."

And that he means 'Christ' by the 'altar' is apparent by two things, that follow,—to omit more, that might be collected by the context.

The first is, in the words immediately following, "For those beasts, whose blood was brought by the high-priest into the holy place for sin, their bodies were burnt without the camp. Therefore, Jesus, also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." His argumentation is this: "The great solemn sacrifice for sin, on the day of atonement, was not burnt upon the altar in the temple, but was burnt without the city; so Christ was sacrificed 'without the gate;' so that, whosoever will partake of that true sacrifice for sin, must go to the altar there, and not to the altar within the temple."

And, in the next verse but one, he shows yet more plainly, that he means Christ by our altar, ver. 15; "Therefore, by him, let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God." As, on the altar in the temple, they offered their sacrifices and thank-offerings,—so by him, as on our altar, let us offer our sacrifice of praise to God.

So that, in the words, you have an affirmative assertion,



and a negative. The affirmative,—that we have Christ for our altar: the negative,—that they that serve the tabernacle, have no right to eat of this altar. The affirmative, comfortable to every true Christian; the latter seems comfortless for every true Jew. The reason of the negative assertion we may inquire more particularly into afterward. To the former to speak at present, we take up this observation from it:—

‘That he that will offer any sacrifice acceptable to God, must go to Christ as the true altar, on which to offer it.’ No sacrifice among the Israelites could be accepted, if it were not offered on the temple-altar. And it was God’s special command, “Thou shalt not offer thy sacrifice in any of thy cities, but shalt go to the altar of the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose.” Nor can any sacrifice be acceptable to God of any Christian, but what is offered to him upon the altar of his appointment, the Lord Christ, where alone is atonement for sinners. As priesthood and sacrifice were typical, and signified to this purpose,—so, also, was the altar of the same signification. And whereas there were two altars at the temple, one for sacrifice, the other for incense, they did both but represent Christ and his acting in his two great works,—viz. his offering himself a sacrifice by his death, and his offering the continual incense of his mediation. And how methodically did the representation proceed suitable to the reality? For, first, the priest offered the sacrifice upon the altar, and then went in within the tabernacle, and offered incense: so Christ first offered himself at his death, and then went into the highest heaven to make intercession.

The Papists, in their mass, take upon them to offer Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice for quick and dead: so they are the altar, and Christ is the offering. But we learn better, to make Christ the altar,—and we ourselves and our services, the offering offered upon it.

For the clearing of the thing before us, and to reduce these words of the apostle to a doctrine of faith, whither he intends them, let us premise these four things:—

I. That every Christian hath three spiritual sacrifices to offer to God; himself,—his devotions and religious services,—and his good works and religious walking. 1. ‘Himself;’ —“I beseech you, brethren, that you present your bodies a



living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God<sup>e</sup>." 2. His 'prayers,' devotions, and religious services; "In every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering<sup>f</sup>." And, 3. His 'holy walking;' ver. 16 of this chapter, "To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifice God is well pleased." Christ is to be offered to God no more, as Papists take on them to offer him every mass; but man is to offer himself to God, the only sacrifice that God now requireth. Now,

II. On what altar is this spiritual sacrifice to be offered, and presented to God? On some spiritual altar, as it is a spiritual offering. Those sacrifices that were earthly and material, required an earthly and material altar; but those that were spiritual, must be offered on some spiritual altar; else the manner of offering them contradicts their nature.

Now, what the apostle speaks concerning the rock in the wilderness, "The rock was Christ:"—so we may say concerning the altar under the gospel, "The altar is Christ." In the law, the offering was to be put into the hands of a priest, or it could not be accepted; so our services are to be put into the hands of Christ, to be presented to God, else no acceptance. And the sacrifice was to be laid upon the altar, or it could not be accepted; so must ours be laid on the altar Christ, or no acceptance. For,

III. The altar must sanctify the sacrifice, to make it acceptable; and so our Saviour tells, Matt. xxiii. 19.—It was not enough, that the sacrifice was a clean beast, and not unclean; nor that it was without fault or blemish to make it an acceptable sacrifice. But it must be laid upon the altar, for that to sanctify it, and to make it a right sacrifice.

IV. And here I cannot but take up the Jewish doctors' most true and pertinent explication of that point, about the altar's sanctifying the gift,—viz. "The altar sanctified that, that was fit for it." The altar could not sanctify an unclean beast, a dog, or an ass, or a cat, to make it a sacrifice,—but only a beast that was clean. And if the beast were a clean beast in his nature, yet if he had faults, or blemishes, the altar did not sanctify him for a fit sacrifice; but it sanctified only that, that was fit for it.

By all which, laid together, we may learn and observe the great doctrine of faith, about our acceptance with God

<sup>e</sup> Rom. xii. 1, 2.

<sup>f</sup> Mal. i. 11.



only by Christ. Which to view particularly, let us begin from this:—

First, None can come to God to find acceptance with him, but he must first give himself into the hand of Christ, to bring him to God for acceptance. The apostle tells us, that all acceptance is in the beloved, and to be expected no other way, Ephes. i. 6. This is the great mystery of the gospel: for the want of which duly owned, Turks and Jews are at loss, and are lost from God for ever. They both pretend for religion, pretend for heaven; but they both miss the door, by which alone they are to enter; and so are excluded eternally, missing of Christ, by whom only we come there. Our Saviour, indeed, speaks of entering and getting into the sheepfold, some other way than at the door; but he saith, they are “thieves and robbers.” His meaning is of false teachers, that can find a way to creep into the sheepfold, the church, to seduce and destroy the sheep, some other way than at the right door. But whosoever will get either into heaven, or, indeed, into the true and sincere religion that leadeth thither,—must enter by Christ, the door; or he will never come there. “I am the way, the truth, and the life; none can come to the Father but by me<sup>d</sup>.” Consider of that, “I am so the way, that none can come to the Father but by me.” Then sure the Papists are out of the way, as well as Turks and Jews, when they think to come to God by the mediation of saints and angels. “None can come to God but by me,” saith our Saviour: ‘But I can come to God (saith a Papist) by the Virgin Mary, by Peter, Paul, and the mediation of other saints in heaven.’ Certainly, they must have some nice distinction here, or they contradict Christ to his face, and take his honour, and give it to another.

Heb. vii. 25: “Christ, having an unfailing priesthood, is able to save to the uttermost those, that come to God by him.” If you come to God, you must come by him; and that only is the way to be saved. But if you expect to come to God by any other means whatsoever, you are out of the way and will be lost. “Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God<sup>e</sup>.” If there were any other way to come to God than by Christ, the death of Christ was but to little purpose, and our be-

<sup>d</sup> John, xiv. 6.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18.



believing in him to as little. And we may justly say with the apostle<sup>f</sup>, “Our preaching is in vain, and your faith is also vain.” It is said of Christ, that “he is a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek<sup>g</sup>.” Though he died and offered himself the great sacrifice for sinners,—yet he is a priest for ever, still offering sacrifice to God; but no more himself, but his people’s sacrifice. And that offering is twofold,—viz. offering the persons of his people to God, as an acceptable living sacrifice;—and offering their services, as an acceptable spiritual sacrifice to God. Of the former you have testimony from his own words, Isa. viii. 18: “Behold, I and the children, which the Lord hath given me:”—of the latter, Rev. viii. 3, where you read of his “offering the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.”

What the manner of Christ’s mediation is, is too curious to inquire after; but what the matter of his mediation is, these two things make evident,—viz. his presenting his people to God’s acceptance; and his presenting their services to the like acceptance. For what acceptance can any soul under heaven find upon his own account? What can a man do towards his own justification before God? “I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee<sup>h</sup>?” A very pertinent question. A man is so little able to find acceptance with God of himself, that he may rather stand amazed, that ever sinful men do find acceptance. The apostle<sup>i</sup> accounts it not an ordinary thing, to “comprehend, with all saints, the breadth and length, and depth and height, of this mystery.”

Before Christ, a mediator, was set up, imagine how Adam could deal with God to find acceptance with him, after he was now become sinful Adam. Nay, it is not easy to conceive, how he dealt with God, even while innocent. For, certainly, it was his duty to pray in his innocence, thereby to show his dependance on God; but upon what interest to pray, when he had no mediator, is something difficult to apprehend. But after he was fallen, and Christ not yet promised, those three hours that he lay in darkness before the promise of Christ came to him,—how could he then pray to God? and upon what account beg his pardon? But I need not use many words to show the need of Christ, a mediator.

Secondly, This that we have spoken concerning the altar,

<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Psal. cx.

<sup>h</sup> Job, vii. 20.

<sup>i</sup> Ephes. iii. 18.



may give us some measure and scantling, how to come to Christ, and believe in him for acceptance,—viz. to rely upon him entirely for our acceptance with God; as the Israelite cast himself entirely upon the priest's offering, and the altar sanctifying his gift, that it might be acceptable.

If there may be any distinction made betwixt coming to Christ, and believing in him (which, indeed, may very well signify the same thing), let us observe it here, and observe it upon the comparison before us about the altar.

An Israelite comes, and brings a sacrifice along with him to the priest and altar, and prays him, "I pray, sir, offer this to God for me for acceptance."—You must first observe the nature and quality of his sacrifice, whether it be fit for the priest to meddle with, and for the altar to receive upon it. I remember a distinction the Jews have, in their writings, concerning a first-born child,—viz. that "he may be fit for the inheritance, but not fit for the priest,"—that is, 'may have some blemish or defect, that he may not be fit to be consecrate to God, as the first-born ought to be; yet may be fit enough to inherit his father's land.'—A man may be fair and fit for this and that employment in earthly things, and very useful in his place and station, when, in the mean while, he may be little fit for Christ's employment or receiving. An Israelite brings a dog, cat, &c, to the priest, and entreats him, to offer that upon the altar for him. Was this a fit offering for the altar? Could the altar, with all its holiness, sanctify such a gift as that? Antiochus the wretch, when he offered swine's flesh upon the altar, it was to defile the altar, and not for the altar to sanctify the sacrifice.

This shows, what kind of person he must be, that goes to Christ, to desire him to present his person an acceptable sacrifice with God, and that he may find favour with him: he must bring him a clean sacrifice, or no coming there. In Isa. lxvi. 3, where the prophet, speaking about abolishing the Jewish sacrifice under the gospel, he saith, "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck; and he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood." Think not, that when offering of clean beasts is ceased, offering of unclean will be accepted. Men think to obtain acceptance and favour from God, through Christ, at an easy rate, and with a little ado, when there is more in it than they conceive. They must



first be such, as are fit for Christ to own, and to present to his Father a sacrifice; fit to be offered to God upon his altar, and not a dog or swine. The apostle tells us, how to come to this our altar, Heb. x. 22: "Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." It is the custom in our university, that when any one presents another to the vice-chancellor and university for the taking of any degree, he undertakes to them, that he is fit for such a degree. Christ never presented any to his Father, to graduate him in his acceptance and favour, but such a one as was qualified and fit for that acceptance. When I say *fit*, I mean not out of *merit*; but so qualified, as God requires those to be qualified, that he will accept.

A thing very well worth the deep consideration of us all, that we be not deceived concerning believing in Christ, as too many are deceived. Who is he among us, but he thinks, at one time or other, so to believe in Christ, as shall serve his turn for salvation; while, in the mean while, he walks in the clean contrary way to believing? To believe in Christ, is, indeed, to rely upon him for salvation; but it is relying upon him on such conditions as Christ will admit of; not at a man's own pleasure. A man takes on him to get to Christ, through him to find acceptance of God,—though his tongue be full of vanity,—hands, of filthiness,—heart, of evil,—life, of profaneness; yet, through Jesus Christ our Lord, he hopes to speed well enough. It is true, indeed, that "there is no other name under heaven," whereby acceptance with God is to be found; but this man does no better than bring a dog or a swine to be offered on the sacred altar, when he thinks that Christ will present such a filthy beast as he, for a person to be accepted of God. No, "Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well;" and then come to the altar, and you may hope for acceptance.

Those that Christ presents to his Father, are such, as of whom he is not "ashamed," Heb. ii. 11, and xi. 16. But would not Christ be ashamed to present a dog or a swine, a filthy and ugly sacrifice to his Father,—a wretch, that is all dirt, and filth, and pollution, and wallows in it still, and will not out of it?



He in the law, that must come nigh the altar, must wash himself in water, and change his garments; or he must not come to offer there. The application is so easy, that I need not to insist upon it:—and by this very thing, we may observe two things:—

I. That reliance upon Christ, comes not into date, till a man do the best he can, to fit himself to be a sacrifice for that altar. The altar's sanctifying of the gift, came not in date, till the offering was fit for the altar. There must be these concurrents: first, it must be of the clean kinds of beasts or birds, oxen, or sheep, or goats, sparrows, pigeons, or turtles; not dog, cat, ass, bear; not a crow, raven, owl, or vulture. Then it must be viewed by some skilful person, that it be without blemish, as well as that it be clean,—viz. that it be not a blind bullock, or lamb; that it be not broken, diseased, &c. And, lastly, the offerer's free-will and mind, in his offering, must be concurrent. And, thus qualified, it was fit for the altar, and the altar sanctified it. Now, was there all this care about the offering of a beast upon a material altar of brass or stone; and is not as much at least required for the offering of a soul's ownself on Christ, the altar? Must any thing polluted or unclean come near that altar?

Faith in Christ, is not so easy a matter, as men take it for; a man must first do all he can in purifying himself, before he can believe. For his believing is his refuging to Christ, to make out for him, when he sees he cannot do it himself.

And by this appears the vast difference betwixt the believing of a Jew, and the faith of a true Christian. The Jew, as he thought, performed the law, and believed that he should be justified by his performance; and looked no farther. A true Christian observes the law, the best he can; but, when he hath done all, he finds himself but an unprofitable servant, and that he comes infinitely short of justification by all he can; therefore, casts himself upon Christ to satisfy for him. “The sacrifices of God are a broken heart; a broken and a contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Under the law, nothing, that was broken or bruised, was to be offered; under the gospel, no heart, but broken or bruised, is to be offered. And whereupon bruised and broken? not only upon sight of the evil they have com-



mitted,—but also upon sense, how little they can do of good, when they have done their best. And then lay such a heart upon the altar; Christ and the altar sanctifies the gift, and makes out for it.

Brethren, take heed you be not deceived about faith, by which you must stand or fall to all eternity. It is more than fancy, or thinking or hoping you shall be saved by Christ; it is more than taking on you to pray in the name of Christ, more than begging mercy for the sake of Christ. It is working and labouring in the way of God's commandments, till you be weary and heavy laden; and then resting yourselves in Christ for safety and refreshing. It is doing your duty all you can, and still leaning on Christ to make out all failings for you. It is that, that must bring up the rear of your best endeavours. As Simon of Cyrene was laid hold upon to bear the cross of Christ after him, when it was too heavy for him,—so, on the contrary, lay hold on Christ, and get him to bear your burden for you, when you yourselves are not able to bear it.

II. By this, also, we may observe, the absolute necessity of keeping God's commandments for salvation, as well as the absolute necessity of faith for salvation, and the amicable, and, indeed, inseparable, agreement betwixt these two. It is impossible to find acceptance with God for justification and salvation, unless, by faith in Christ, we be presented as living sacrifices upon him, the altar. And it is impossible to be fit sacrifices for that altar, unless, by keeping the commandments of God, we be purified and fitted. For, as faith “purifieth the heart” where it is once come<sup>k</sup>,—so, keeping the commandments of God, is purifying the heart, that faith may come. Consider of that, 1 Pet. i. 22, “Seeing you have purified your hearts in obeying of the truth.” Now, what is obeying of the truth, but doing what God, in the word of truth, directeth and commandeth? And this also purifieth the heart towards believing, as faith doth, when a man now believes.

And thus ‘believing’ and ‘obeying’ are so twisted together, that, without keeping of God's commandments the best you can, you cannot come by faith; and faith, when it is come, cannot be without keeping of God's commandments the best you can. For as to the former, we may not impro-

<sup>k</sup> Acts, xv. 9.



perly apply those words of the apostle, Gal. iii. 23; "For before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterward be revealed." And as to the latter, that in James ii. 26, "As the body, without the spirit, is dead,—so faith, without works, is dead also."

And now to make some application upon what hath been spoken, and to take up the words in order.

First, From the title here given to our Saviour, that he is our 'altar,' upon and through whom to offer ourselves, and all our services, to God,—we may observe, that the bare offering of Christ himself upon the cross, is not the *all*, that a Christian hath to look after for his salvation, but he himself is also to offer himself through Christ to God. Christ was a dying sacrifice; a Christian must be a living: and as Christ voluntarily offered himself to God, so is he also to do in his place and station. How oft do we find in Scripture, that the death of Christ doth challenge our dying to sin, and not living to ourselves? "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump; for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us<sup>1</sup>."—And that "he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them<sup>m</sup>." And so there are divers other places to the like tenor.

The obedience of Christ does not dissolve the obedience of a Christian, but enhance it. For his obedience was not to disannul our obedience, but to challenge it, to love him who loved us first. His offering himself, was to lead us the way, and to teach and engage us to offer ourselves also. He to die, according to the will of God,—and we to live, according to his will; that is, "to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness."

Secondly, Now since every one, that is accepted of God, is to be presented to him as a sacrifice offered through Christ, as the most sacred altar,—it may give us just cause daily to examine ourselves, how fit we are to be presented to that altar, and from that altar to God. The sacrifice under the law was to be examined, whether it were fit or no, by one, that was skilful in such a scrutiny. The work, now under the gospel, must be our own; every one to examine his own heart, since the heart should be that, that is chiefly offered. And let our hearts speak to us; if they will but

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. v. 7.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. v. 15.



learn to speak truth,—how many of us, think we, are fit for the hands of Christ to present us at his own altar, and to offer us to his Father? Will his pure and most holy hands meddle with any thing, that is impure and filthy, to bring us to his altar? A man is worldly and covetous, filthy and lascivious, cruel and envious: is such a beast, such an unclean beast, fit for Christ to hand to his altar, to make him a sacrifice to God? Do we believe, that ever he will or can say to his Father, “Father, I present this filthy man to thee, to be accepted of thee, as a well-pleasing sacrifice?” Who of us would be willing, that Christ should present us to God, to take us as we are, and deal with us as we deserve? Who of us can think that we are such, as that Christ may call us “brother, or sister, or mother,” and commend us unto God’s acquaintance and favour under such titles?

Let us compare the case with those the apostle speaks of here, that “have no right to eat of our altar,”—viz. those that serve the tabernacle of the Levitical priesthood. And why have they no right?

I. It may be said, they had no right to eat of the sin-offering of atonement; for that was all to be burnt, and nothing to be eaten of it, as the apostle toucheth immediately after. Now, in this regard, the parallel will not hold, because Christ was not consumed, as that sin-offering was; but he was sacrificed that he might be eaten, or spiritually fed upon.

II. What the priests did eat of the sacrifices, they ate within the verge of the temple, and might not bring those holy things out of the holy ground. But, as the apostle tells here, “Christ was sacrificed without the gate,” whither it was not lawful for them to come to eat any sacrifice. But this, I believe, is not the reason why the apostle saith, “They had no right to eat of the altar, that we have.”

III. The Jews have a tenet, which is considerable, and not impertinent, כהנים אוכלים ובעלים מתכפרים “The priests’ eating of the sacrifices was for expiation of them, that offered them.” It is very true, that God allowed the priests such and such parts of the beast sacrificed, for their diet and maintenance. But that was not all; but there was some religious concern in their eating them,—viz. for the benefit of the offerer. Now, if you take the apostle speaking in reference to this matter,—the priests that served the



tabernacle, could not eat of the altar or sacrifice, that we have, under any such notion. For the offering of Christ, as it was not by men, but by himself and God,—so the feeding on him cannot benefit either them, or any other, but him only, that feeds on him.

IV. Therefore, the apostle's reference is to the priests' very serving in the tabernacle; that they themselves, that stood upon those sacrifices and services in the temple, as sufficient enough to atone for sin,—by that very conceit, outed themselves out of benefit by Christ our altar, who is the only atonement; and they that can feed upon any other way of atonement, have nothing to do with him.

We cannot but be affected with the expression of “having no right to eat of our altar,” as a very doleful accent, which speaks having no right at all to Christ. Which very sound may make a heart to tremble. No right to Christ! No portion in the Son of God! The very mention of the thing may justly move us to the examination of ourselves, whether we think we have any portion in him, yea or no. Take heed it be not with too many, as it was with the church<sup>n</sup>, that said, “I am rich, and increased in riches, and want nothing;” whereas, “she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Take heed, that we think not we have share in Christ, and have none at all; and that we perish not with such a dead child in our bosoms, such a fancy and delusion in our hearts.

Look upon these men, that “served the tabernacle:” they are men that are careful and attendant upon their service, blameless in their lives, zealous in their religion, and fervently looking after atonement and salvation. And yet, because they relied upon their services, and thought to be saved by the very works they did, they miss of faith, and so miss of Christ, and have no right in him; and so perish from him for ever and ever. How many of us have gone so far in a religious way, as we may suppose these men to have gone,—and sought for justification and salvation so earnestly, as they have done,—have been so constant in devotion and duty, as they have been! And yet, they had no right in Christ. What just fears may this create in us, that we also have no right at all in him!

<sup>n</sup> Rev. iii.



## A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

LUKE, XV. 7.

*I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons, that need no repentance.*

THE occasion of these words is at ver. 1, 2, where the evangelist tells us, that "all the publicans and sinners came unto our Saviour to hear him;" which is something strange to hear. For it was much, that any such came to him; but, exceeding much, that *all* should come. And not a much unlike expression you have at ver. 1 of chap. xii; 'Επισυναχθεισῶν τῶν μυριάδων, that "tens of thousands of the multitude," or common people, "were gathered to him:" twenty thousand at least, according to the strict propriety of the Greek expression:—which was a very vast company.

But if you observe the beginning of the tenth chapter, it gives light to these stories. A little above half a year before our Saviour's death, he sends forth seventy disciples, by two and two, to every city, and town, and place, whither he himself was to come. These were to certify the people of his person, that he was Messiah; and to certify them of his coming to them, and to prepare them for the receiving of him against he should come. This raises vast multitudes to hearken to him, hearing of Messiah's coming, and knowing where to meet him; and, amongst others, a very great and general conflux of publicans and sinners, men of an infamous name, and scandalous conversation, among the nation. The scribes and Pharisees quarrel with our Saviour for entertaining such, and conversing with them:—an evil business, but proves occasion of good, and light ariseth out of that darkness.

For, thereupon our Saviour proposeth the three parables of this chapter; and, in them, transmits comfort to all posterity that should repent, and encouragement to all to repentance. The words of the text are the application of the

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1265.



first parable. As a man, that hath lost one sheep out of a flock of a hundred, rejoiceth more for the finding again that one that was lost, than for the ninety-and-nine, that went not astray,—so, “I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than,” &c.

In the words, you see, there are two assertions:—the one positive; the other, comparative. The positive, that “there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” The comparative, that “there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-nine just persons,” &c. The former, something strange, but very comfortable: the latter, more strange, and something difficult.

It is something to hear of ‘joy in heaven for a sinner’s repentance;’ but more strange to hear of any men on earth, ‘that need no repentance.’ There is nothing but joy in heaven, and, one would think, enough and enough again in the fruition of God. It may seem something strange, that any addition should be made to it by the conversion of men. And it were no great news to hear of ninety-nine thousand, that did not repent; but strange news to hear of any one person, that needed no repentance. The wisest of men tells us, that “there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not<sup>b</sup>.” And then, is there a just man upon earth, that needeth no repentance for his sinning? And the apostle James<sup>c</sup> assures us, that “in many things we offend all:” and that very thing may assure us, that we have need to repent of many things.

For the apprehending of the meaning of our Saviour in this comparison, we may observe, that he speaks either by way of opposition to something in the opinion of those, to whom he speaks,—or directly in reference to the persons, of whom he speaks.

I. It was common with the nation of the Jews to distinguish ‘just’ men into two sorts. Those that had been sinners, but had repented, and were become new men; these they acknowledged to be just men, in comparison of wicked men, and in comparison of what themselves had been before. But those that had not been sinners, and faulty, and vicious men, but had led a fair course of life all their time, like that “young man<sup>d</sup>, that had kept all the commandments from his youth:” these men they account חַסִּדִּים “good or holy men,”

<sup>b</sup> Eccles. vii. 20.<sup>c</sup> Chap. iii. 2.<sup>d</sup> Matt. xix.



and צדיקים גמורים “perfectly just men.” And, oh! how far were these beyond those men, that had needed repentance! How they speak plainly and copiously to this tenor in their writings, it were easy to produce. I shall give you but two instances, according to the two things I mention; viz. their making such a distinction, and their under-ranking men of repentance below the other. As to the first:—

I. At the feast of tabernacles, while the temple stood, the elders and grandees of the nation used to dance in the temple every night, and to sing these songs. Some of them this, “Blessed be my youth, that hath no way shamed my old age.” These were חסידים (say they) “good and holy men;” and that had been “men of good works” מעיקרא “from their first sprouting,” or growing.—The other sang this, “Blessed be my old age, that hath made amends, and expiated for my youth.” And these, they say, “were בעלי תשובה men of repentance.” And,

II. How far they undervalued these penitents and repentance below the other, they speak in their interpretation of those words, Isa. lxiv. 4: “From the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him, that waiteth for him.”—“The good things (say they) that the prophets prophesied of, were for men of repentance, and those things were revealed to the prophets: but the things that are laid up for those that are perfectly just, never prophet’s eye saw, nor ear heard, nor were they ever known to any but God.” This distinction the apostle alludes to, Rom. v. 7: “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:” that is, for one that is barely a ‘righteous’ man, by repenting himself of his unrighteous ways: “yet, peradventure, for a good man some will venture to die:” that is, for one that is ‘perfectly just from the beginning,’ and that needeth no repentance.

They do, indeed, prefer repentance before perfect righteous ones, in this one regard,—that penitents have tasted the pleasures and sweet of sin, and have forsaken them, and cast them off: “When it is doubtful (say they) whether those perfect righteous ones would have done so, if they had tasted the pleasures of sin, as the others did.” Yet, howsoever, they account it better always to have been of a holy conversation, than once to have been unholy, though now become



holy; and better never to have needed repentance, than to have needed it, and betaken to it.

And if you understand our Saviour as facing this opinion of theirs, there is no difficulty in his words, but they are plain and easy. As if he should thus speak out at large; "You think yourselves very righteous, and that ye need no repentance; and, therefore, ye despise these poor creatures, publicans and sinners, as men of a hopeless and desperate condition: but I say unto you, There is more joy in heaven over such a one repenting, than over a hundred such as you conceive yourselves to be, not needing any repentance at all."

II. Or doth our Saviour speak of those, that have been good, not in their own conceit, but, indeed, and in reality, from the very first, and never run into any extravagances from a child? As Josiah sought the Lord from eight years old, and so continued; and as Timothy, trained up in piety from a child: and as others, that have been so happy as to 'remember their Creator in the days of their youth;' and have begun to be pious, and so have continued from their cradle. Doth our Saviour speak of such as these on the one hand, as well as he speaks of sinners, that come at last to repent, on the other? Is there more joy in heaven, for a penitent thief upon the cross, that had been a villain to that very time,—than for a good Obadiah, that had feared God from his youth? More joy in heaven for a Mary Magdalen repenting, who had been an arrant strumpet a long time,—than for a holy Hannah, that had never trod awry? It seems so, by the parable of the prodigal and his elder brother: more joy for the return of that mad, rambling, debauched, vicious fellow, than for his elder brother, who had ever kept at home with his father, and never transgressed his commands. And how the parable may admit this construction, we shall observe afterward.

However, though, as to the comparison, there may be some difficulty, and about the person that is said to 'need no repentance;'—yet, as to the positive, and about a 'sinner that repents,' there is no scruple at all. And so we will speak to that especially; and speak to the comparison, as occasion offers itself. The positive being this:—

"There is joy in heaven for a sinner that repenteth."—Joy in heaven, when a sinner repenteth! or, for a sinner that repenteth! When we have wondered a while at the thing itself, then we may ask, Joy among whom?



I. And, truly, we have very just cause to wonder at the thing itself. And it is as feeling a passage, as likely we can meet with, in all the Scripture, "Joy in heaven upon a sinner's repenting." How, then, may you construe that expression, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into thy Master's joy?" Mutual joy; thou, rejoicing in thy Master, — and thy Master, rejoicing in thee. The good servant, by his very repentance, rejoicing his Lord, as well as his salvation with his Lord rejoicing him. I cannot but think of that passage concerning the eunuch<sup>e</sup>, that, when he was converted and baptized, "he went away rejoicing." And there was rejoicing in heaven for it, by our Saviour's relation here, as well as there was with him on earth: "one deep calling upon another through the noise of the water-pipes." And like two lutes tuned in union, the very same string of joy sounding in heaven, that was struck here upon earth: not much unlike the style of that passage, "What ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven."

We read of some, that, upon reading or hearing some particular texts of Scripture, have been converted, and become new men. So was St. Austin, by reading a verse or two in Rom. xiii: Junius, by reading three or four verses of John i: and so others by others.

Now, can you find a more winning, melting, piercing, passage almost any where in all the Bible than this, if we well consider of it, "There is joy in heaven over a sinner, that repenteth?" That for yours, or mine, or any of our repentances,—there should be joy in heaven! Alas! if we were all in hell, what were heaven the worse for it? And yet, that it should be joyful news to heaven, if we repent! Do we not know, how joyful news takes upon earth? And do we not wonder, that our repentance should bring joyful news to heaven?

We read, how Jacob was ravished and revived, when the joyful news came to him, that his son Joseph was alive. And are there those in heaven, would be so affected, if we repent? Yes, the great King of heaven tells us so, "That there is joy in heaven," &c. How full are we, if we have good news to tell, till we tell it! Ahimaaz and Cushirun, as if they ran for their lives, who shall first bring the good news of victory over Absalom. And is it possible for any

<sup>e</sup> Acts, viii.



of us to bring good news to heaven? Yes, the text tells us we may; for our repentance would set heaven a-rejoicing; and be very gladsome tidings there. And who is it, that runs astrife, that he may first bring such rejoicing news thither? As the four lepers said at the camp of the Syrians, "We do not well, that we tarry here, for this is a day of good tidings; and we are to blame, if we go not, and tell them." Men and brethren, more joyful news cannot come to heaven than of our repenting. And are we not moved at the thoughts of it, and do we not blame ourselves for delaying to send such news thither? Do we, by muddling here for money, and pleasures, and preferments, and I know not what, as those lepers did in the tents of the Syrians,—when our repenting and turning to God would set heaven itself on rejoicing for us?

It is no wonder, if a soul rejoice, when it gets to heaven: but it may ravish us with wonder and amazement, that heaven should rejoice for a man's making thither. For what need hath heaven of such poor, wretched, creatures, as we are? Who would not dwell upon such a subject as this? But it must be rather in meditation than elocution. For astonishment at the thing may swallow up words, that we are not able to speak of it, to speak it out. Make out by your memory, meditation, and admiring, what my tongue wants in expressing and uttering. Let such a ravishing truth as this, 'That there is joy in heaven,' &c, never slip out of your memory. Cherish the warm thoughts of it in your spreading meditation. Meditate yourselves into rapture at such comfortable tidings from heaven, that your repentance would be joyful tidings to heaven; that there would be joy in heaven for your repenting.

II. But joy 'among whom' there? And let that be a second thing to meditate of, and to warm our meditation. The text only tells of joy in heaven, and particularizes no more; but the rest of the chapter speaks out 'with whom.' The last parable in the chapter tells you, there is joy with God the Father, by that intimation, how the father rejoiced upon the return of his lost prodigal son. The first parable in the chapter tells you, there is joy with Christ, the great Shepherd, by that intimation, how the man rejoiced upon the finding and bringing again his wandering and lost sheep. And the application of the middle parable speaks it out,



ver. 10; that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner, that repenteth."

Joy with God the Father, joy with Christ the Son, joy with the holy angels. Do we need to inquire, whether with the blessed saints in heaven? We have more reason to stand admiring at this, that is so plain before us, than to intricate ourselves with that, that is more obscure. God, and Christ, and the angels, know a man's repenting here; which the glorified saints in heaven, for aught we know, know not. And God, and Christ, and angels, can be helpful to a soul in the ways of repentance here, which the glorified saints in heaven cannot be. I know who they be, that will maintain, that the saints in glory know a man's repentance, and can be helpful to him in the ways of repentance: and that, therefore, they are to be prayed unto. But we leave them to their proofs and practices: we have no such doctrine, nor custom; nor the churches of Christ. We doubt not, but,

First, The saints in glory desire the consummating of the mystical body of Christ in glory. It is their desire here, and it leaves them not there; "They groan here for the adoption," that is, "the redemption of the body<sup>f</sup>." And they carry the same affection of desire of it into heaven.

Secondly, We may very well conceive, that the saints in glory rejoice at this his mystical body coming on to be glorified, when a soul comes to heaven.

But that they know what men do here below, is neither proved, nor is it material to be believed. Therefore, I shall not entangle myself in that question, but leave it to them that do believe it, to prove it, when they are able.

That God, and Christ, and angels, rejoice over a sinner that repenteth, is that, that is before us: and it is a thing, that may be wondrous in our eyes, and we can never meditate too much upon it. That God should rejoice over a repenting sinner with "Oh! this my son was dead and gone, but he is alive and found again:" That Christ should rejoice with "Oh! this my sheep was wandered and quite lost, but here he is found out, and brought back again:" and that the angels should rejoice with "Oh! here is a poor groat, that was quite lost and gone; but now found and recovered again." Certainly, these are strange things to hear: and who could have believed such a report, but that word of it is brought

<sup>f</sup> Rom. viii. 23.



from heaven by him, that came to reveal the will of the Father, which is in heaven?

Upon the hearing of it, whether shall we first stand to admire the wondrous goodness of God, Christ, and angels; or to consider the admirable excellency and virtue of repentance, that comes off so happily and comfortably with the rejoicing of God, Christ, and angels?

When we rank angels so roundly with Christ and God, it is only in reference to the particular we are speaking of, their rejoicing for the conversion of a sinner:—for who else knoweth not the great distance between them, as between the Creator and creatures? But in reference to the subject before us, let us consider these two things of them:—

I. That their wills are so entirely agreeing with the will of God, that they can will nothing, but as he willeth. Their dial goeth exactly with his sun, and their will set only by his; “They do his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his words<sup>g</sup>.” And they cannot go a hair-breadth from it to the right hand or left. That is the fair copy we have before us in that petition, when we pray, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” So that what God mindeth towards the good of men, they do the like. Doth he desire the salvation of men? They do the same.—Doth he look and wait for any man’s repentance? They do so also.—Doth he rejoice for a sinner’s conversion? They rejoice also. And that,

II. Not only out of their entire agreement with the will of God, but also out of their entire love of men. They are “ministering spirits for the good of them, that shall be saved<sup>h</sup>.” And they do their ministration most willingly and readily, and out of entire love, and desire of the good of men. Guess them by their contrary, the angels that fell. The devils seek the mischief of man all that they can: the good angels seek his good. The devils do heartily desire, that all men might be damned; the good angels desire, that all may be saved. The devils rejoice in any man’s perdition; the good angels rejoice for his conversion. And they willingly and readily attend upon men for that end, as God doth appoint them; and they require no pay or reward for their attendance, more than the man’s amendment and repentance,—and that he would do, as God would have him.

<sup>g</sup> Psal. ciii. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. i. 14.



The Papists will tell you of ‘worshipping angels:’ and the apostle tells you, there were some so deceived, as to worship angels, Col. ii. 18. But will you hear what an angel himself saith upon that point? Read Rev. xxii. 8, 9: “I fell down to worship, before the feet of the angel, which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God.” Yes; that is all they desire for their attendance about us. Let us worship God, fear God, serve God; and they account themselves very well paid. Their will is so entirely resolved into the will of God, that they desire no more for all their service, than that our will might be resolved so too. And their love and affection is so entire to man, that for their ministration they desire no better pay, than that man would love God, for his own everlasting good.

Therefore, though angels be infinitely below God, as being his creatures; and though they cover their faces before God<sup>i</sup>, as owning themselves so infinitely below him: yet, when the good of man is the business that is transacted,—as the seeking of his good, rejoicing for his good; it is no wonder if angels be also named with God and Christ in some concurrence for such a thing.

But in what sense are we to understand God, and Christ, and angels’ rejoicing at a sinner’s repentance? Are they subject to such a kind of passion, and such a change of passion and affection, as we are? Consider the contrary. As God is said to rejoice at sinners’ repentance, so he is said to be grieved at their sinning and impenitency, Psal. lxxviii. 40; and xcv. 10; and Ephes. iv. 10, &c. Now, is there such a change in God, as one while to be grieved, another while to rejoice; one while to be sad, another while to be glad? This is for such changeable things as we are, that are twenty things in an hour; but not for the Lord of hosts, “with whom is no change, nor shadow of turning.” But these expressions are used concerning God, the things themselves, joy and grief, being so well known to us,—that from these known things, we might judge, how God looks upon sin and impenitency, and how he looks upon repentance: how the one takes with him, and how the other.

<sup>i</sup> Isa. vi.



Joy is the highest expression of our contentment, and being well pleased: for it speaks that we have sped of that contentment we desired. For consider of these three degrees, desire,—hope,—and joy. There is a thing that would give us contentment, if we could obtain it, and thereupon we *desire* it. *Hope* to obtain it, doth somewhat add to the contentment, and doth warm the *desire* after it. But *joy* comes, when we have obtained it. Our joy is in our enjoying that content we desire. So that, by God, Christ, and angels' rejoicing at a sinner's repentance, is expressed, how great contentment, and satisfaction, and well pleasing, a sinner's repentance is to them. It is that, that they have mainly and earnestly desired: and now, when it is obtained, oh! how contentive and well pleasing is it to them! "I have now found the sheep, that I long looked for: I have found the groat, that I long desired to find: and my lost son, that I have long longed for his return, is now come safe home again."

'There is nothing more desirable to God, Christ, and angels, than a sinner's repentance.'

Let that be the first thing, that we spend our present thoughts upon. "Wine glads God and man," Judg. ix; so repentance glads God and angels. I remember that, Job xxxviii. 7, where there is mention of the creation of the world, and of "laying the foundation of the earth, and the corner-stone of it:" and then it is said, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The whole choir of angels sang, and shouted for joy, to see that great work of the Creator to go so wonderfully. And it was worthy of all their shouting, and singing, and rejoicing. But here is a business, that God himself joins himself with the choir, and rejoices and triumphs with angels too.

And what can move God, and Christ, and angels, to rejoice but this? Think seriously of this question,—'What could move them to rejoice but only this?' Look all the world through, and think, what in it might move joy in heaven but this. Gold, and silver, and wealth, and earthly pomp, is but a drug, as we say, reputed there. And bring tidings of that: and what is that to heaven? That that we so dote on, that we are ready to venture soul, body, eternity, all for, i. e. the pelf and prosperity of the world,—offer it to



God, Christ, angels, or glorified spirits, by bags, barns, by heaps, by mountains,—what are all these to heaven? As much despised, as earth is below heaven: No; it could be none of these earthly treasures, that moved the joy of heaven: nothing but the repentance of a sinner.

Most true, God and Christ would be never the less blessed, and holy, and glorious, if never man in the world should repent: for God receiveth no addition from man, but man from God. And the blessed angels would be never the less blessed and happy, if never person should repent: for their happiness is primitive and original to them, and not accidental. If all the world were in hell, what were God less in majesty and glory? And what were the angels less in blessedness and purity? And, therefore, it is the more ravishing a consideration, that God and angels should rejoice, when any come to heaven. But the repentance and salvation of men is not a thing, that God could not be without: for he was the same God before there was a world, that he will be for ever. Nor is it a thing the angels could not be without: for the angels were what they are, before man was in being.

But God would not, angels would not, be without men's repentance and salvation: and, as I may say with reverence, they are not satisfied, will not be satisfied, without men's salvation. The principle of this desiring is in the goodness of their own will, not in any pinching urgency in their own want. A poor miserable beggar, a poor miserable prisoner; that the one should come to a better estate, and the other obtain his liberty; if we have any whit divine or angelic hearts, we should wish it should be so, and we should rejoice, if it were so: but this not out of any pinching need we have of the bettering of their estate: for we are not the worse, while they are in poverty and prison, and we should not be bettered by their being out. But something within of love, charity, pity, and goodness, is that, that moves us to desire their bettering, at least should do.

And how many inward principles, as with reverence I may call them, there are, to move God, and Christ, and angels, so to desire man's repentance, the way to his salvation, not a small time would serve to discourse. I shall only observe these two things concerning it:—

First, God created the world for man, and man in the



world, more especially to show and communicate his goodness. Consult Psal. cxxxvi; and it will inform, that the bottom of God's design in creating all things, was to impart his mercy. "He made the heavens:"—why? "Because his mercy endureth for ever."—"He stretcheth the earth upon the waters:" why? "Because his mercy endureth for ever."—"That made two great lights: Because his mercy endureth for ever," &c. Showing all along, that that, which moved God to create the world, was mercy: and because he would impart mercy to the creature, especially man, for whom he created all things. It is true, that he created the world to show his eternal power and Godhead; and so the apostle intimates, Rom. i. 20. But he created the world more especially to show that, which he meant to communicate, which was his mercy: whereas his eternal power and Godhead he cannot so communicate. But,

Secondly, By the fall of man, the brave workmanship and design of God is ruined. Man, that he created to be his servant, is now become the devil's bond-slave: and he, to whom he intended his mercy, hath now utterly lost his mercy, and is under the worst of misery. Satan hath now got the day, and all is his own: but 'the zeal of the Lord of hosts' will not suffer it. Mercy doth not forsake poor man in misery, but doth double itself, and become grace. Mercy had made him of a happy condition; grace restores him from a condition miserable.—Mercy had made him able to do for himself; and when that was lost, grace raiseth up Christ to do and suffer for him. Mercy had made him partaker of the divine image; grace makes him 'partaker of the divine nature.'

There is a principle in God, as I may call it, that cannot but be moving for the good of man: and a principle in angels, that cannot but delight in that principle of God. I say, 'that cannot but be moving;' when, indeed, the wheel that stirs all, and necessitates that motion, is only the goodness of God, and the love of angels to men. As the moving, so the reason of the moving, is within themselves.

*Object.* Why, then, are not all men saved? If there be such an essential moving in God for the good of man, why do not all men partake of that goodness? And if such joy in heaven for a sinner's repentance, why doth not God bring all the world to repentance? For if he would, he



could do it; and if he so delight in it, why doth he not do it?

*Answer.* I remember the saying of the prophet, "The Lord is pleased, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify the law and make it glorious." As the Lord is pleased to magnify his grace in man's salvation,—so God is pleased to magnify the means of grace,—and that man should magnify the means of grace, or no salvation. God never intended, that men should leap into heaven without more ado; but that they should take Jacob's ladder, the means that he hath appointed, to get up thither. In that opposition, that God sets in the prophet, betwixt his ways, and men's ways,—“Are not my ways equal, are not your ways unequal?”—he plainly directs to take his ways, whosoever intends to come to him. For it is not ‘man's ways;’ it is no other way, that will bring to him.

Now, the means of grace and salvation, we may distinguish, into what God hath afforded for man's direction and forewarning, and what a man is to practise according to that direction. The word and ordinances of God is that, that God hath afforded for direction and forwarding. And for the practical means, I shall mention but these three instead of more:—a man's striving to get clear from Satan;—his labouring to have part in Christ;—and his glorifying God by obedience.

Here are the reasons of the joy in heaven, when a sinner repents: Because a soul is delivered from Satan: because there is one come-in towards the making-up of the body of Christ, and to the glorifying of God, and his word, and his Son, and grace. I might enlarge copiously upon all these particulars. Now, though there be such joy in heaven for a sinner's repentance upon these reasons, yet can we not think, for all that joy, that men should be brought to repentance, that either despise such means, or are far from applying themselves to them.

Upon these things, that we have hitherto spoken, we may the better judge of our Saviour's comparison here, of more and less rejoicing over ‘a penitent sinner,’ and a ‘just person.’ A person that hath followed righteousness from his youth, this man is not lost to God, because he hath always been in his ways. But a person that never came into the ways of God, and hath always been extravagant,—



that man is as yet lost to God. He is twice or thrice lost,—in Adam, in himself, and by both lost to God. Now, when such a person as this repents, and turns into the ways of God, oh! how is God and Christ delighted, and well pleased to see such a conversion. Not but that God tenders the soul of a just person, as well as such a penitent's; but by how much the greater and more apparent danger he is delivered from, the more is God, as I may speak, affected with his deliverance: and his own grace and word is the more apparently glorified in such a deliverance.



## A SERMON,

PREACHED UPON

LUKE, XXIII. 42, 43.

*And he saith unto Jesus, Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.—And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

OUR Saviour upon his cross, was like Joseph in his prison, in regard of this circumstance,—that he was between two thieves, that had offended against the law of the land, as Joseph was between two servants of Pharaoh, that had offended against the law of the life of their master. One of these delinquents was delivered,—and the other, executed: as one of these thieves is saved, and the other perished. But here is a very great difference and discord,—that Joseph entreats one of these offenders to remember him, when it should be well with him, but he forgot him: but here one of the offenders entreats Christ, that he would remember him, when he came into his kingdom; and He does it, and forgets him not.

O! who would not love thee, O thou King of mercies, though the King of sorrows, that forgettest thine own tortures, to remember a poor petitioner; and mindest not the racking of thine own cross, to take care of another soul's deliverance! And who would be ashamed, nay, who would not triumph, in a crucified Jesus, that evidenceth such salvation in his very crucifying?—that, in the deepest of his shame, and in the highest of his pain, and greatest of his weakness, shows such pity, such strength, such deliverance, towards a poor wretch, when there is but a span betwixt him and destruction; when the roaring lion had him in his mouth, and it was but three or four hours' journey, to have got him into his den. But in comes this great Deliverer, in the very needful nick of time: and, in the midst of all his weakness and anguish, he wrings the lamb out of the jaws of the devourer, and secures him; “Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”



For the construction of the words, only these two carry some difficulty with them. One in the thief's petition,—what he means by 'Christ's kingdom:' and the other in Christ's answer,—what he means by 'paradise.' The former we will refer to speak to afterward: and, indeed, the explication of the latter will explain the former. But as for the latter, who shall explain it to us?

If you will believe some, they will make it something different from the highest and happiest heaven: though, if the apostle were rapt into the highest heaven, he saith, "he was taken up to paradise." But here you must believe, that our Saviour spake according to the common notion and apprehension of the nation; and our surest way to understand it, is to take the sense, in which they understood it. In their writings, they commonly speak of 'the garden of Eden,' which speaks but the same thing with 'paradise:' and that what they meant by it, was the place and state of the blessed, may appear by these two things:—

I. That they constantly oppose it to hell, or Gehennah: instances out of their writings might be given numberless. Their explication of those words of Solomon may suffice, Eccles. vii. 14; "God hath set the one against the other;" that is, say they, "the garden of Eden, and Gehennah," i. e. paradise and hell. Now, as 'hell,' in their construction, was the place of the wicked and damned in torment;—so 'paradise,' on the contrary, in their construction, was the place of the righteous and blessed in glory. And,

II. This appears in their writings more plain, in that they tell us, 'that Abraham, when he died, went to paradise; Moses, when he died, went to paradise:'—which elsewhere they express after this manner; 'That Abraham and Moses, and all righteous ones, when they die, are laid up under the very throne of God.' To which that seems to allude, Rev. vi, where mention is made of the holy 'souls under the altar.' For the 'altar' they accounted the seat of the divine presence. The thief very well understood the meaning, for he was no stranger to the phrase in the nation: and he knew his petition, of being remembered by Christ in his kingdom, was sufficiently granted, when Christ secured him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

I. So that, in the two verses, you have the thief turned to Christ, and Christ to him; the thief petitioning, and



Christ promising: the thief begging for heaven, and Christ granting it: the great power and work of divine grace appearing in the thief's conversion, and the great freeness and abundance of divine grace appearing in Christ's pardon. The man's request, as happy a prayer as ever man made: and our Saviour's return, as happy an answer as man could desire.

I. We must first look upon the 'man' and his 'prayer.' The *man*, in the evangelists' character of him, was ληστής, 'a thief,' for so one calls him; and κακούργος, 'a malefactor,' for so another: one that had traded in mischief, and it had now brought him to the gallows. And on the gallows, for a while, bad enough too, if you will take the words of Matthew in strict propriety; for he joins both the thieves as companions together in reviling of Christ, chap. xxvii. 44; "The thieves also, that were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." That is, the same that other standers-by reviled him with; "If he be Christ, let him come down from the cross: and let God deliver him, if he will have him." And so it doth magnify divine grace the more, if it checked him in his very reviling,—and made that tongue, that reproached Christ, in the very next instant to confess and adore him. So Saul was happily checked, even while he was breathing rage and revenge against the church,—and he brought to be a most special member and minister in it.

The *cause* of this man's conversion we must all ascribe to God's infinite grace and goodness. But the means, that that grace and goodness used for his conversion, I cannot but ascribe to these two things; a doctrine, and a miracle: as, in those times, doctrines and miracles went very commonly together.

I. I cannot but suppose, that the darkness, that then began to be over all the land, wrought something with this man to bring him to some consideration with himself, of the present case, which he had not before. His fellow-thief, it seems, was not moved with it at all; but I cannot but believe, that this was so deeply affected with it, that it proved a means of his conversion. They both of them knew very well, that Jesus suffered merely, because he professed himself to be the Christ. That is plain by their saying to him, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." And now this man, seeing so strange an occurrence, as had been not seen or heard of at any man's execution before,—begins to be con-



vinced, that he was the Christ indeed, for whom such a wondrous miracle was wrought and manifested. And then,

II. It may very probably be conceived, that he remembered those passages of the prophet Isaiah, describing his passion and suffering, chap. liii; and particularly that, ver. 12, "He was numbered with the transgressors." A clause, which the Jewish expositors wrest, some one way, some another, because they cannot abide to hear of Messias's sufferings. But (which we may very well think), as divine grace brought his soul to the acknowledgment of Christ,—so it brought also that prediction of Christ's sufferings, and with such company, to his remembrance, as a means to work him to that acknowledgment. For how might he argue, "This Jesus, after all the great miracles that he hath done, agreeable to the working of Messiah, hath asserted and maintained, that he is Messiah to the very death: this strange and wondrous darkness, that is begun over all the land, cannot but bear witness to such a thing. And when it is so plainly prophesied by the prophet Isaiah, that he should suffer, and be numbered with such malefactors, as I and my fellow are,—I am past all doubting, that this Jesus is the promised Messiah." Therefore, he said unto Jesus, 'Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.'

A great faith, that can see the sun under so thick a cloud; that can discover a Christ, a Saviour, under such a poor, scorned, despised, crucified Jesus, and call him 'Lord.' A great faith, that when he sees Jesus struggling for his own life, and no deliverer come to him; yet sees reason to cast himself upon him for his eternal state and everlasting condition, and pray to him, "Lord, remember me." A great faith, that could see Christ's kingdom through his cross, and grave, and death, and where there was so little sign of a kingdom; and pray to be remembered in that kingdom.

I doubt the apostles reached not to such a faith in all particulars. They acknowledged Jesus, indeed, to be Christ, while he lived; but when he is dead, they are at it, "We trusted, that it had been he, that should have redeemed Israel," Luke xxiv. 21. But now they could not tell, what to make of it; but this man, when he is dying, doth so stoutly own him. They looked for a kingdom, that Christ should have indeed; but they little looked, that "Christ should suffer, and so enter into his kingdom," as it is intimated in



the same chapter, ver. 26: but this man looks for it, through, and after, his sufferings: that it is no wonder, if he sped at the hands of Christ, when he brings so strong a faith with him; and that when he pours out his prayer, "Lord, remember me," &c, in such strength of believing,—it is no wonder, if he hear from him, in whom he so believes, "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

And could such a faith be without a parallel and suitable measure of 'repentance?' Our Saviour very well saw, that it was not. And the evangelist gives some intimation, that it was not. For he tells, that he confessed his own fault; which is one sign of his repentance; "We are here justly, and receive the due reward of our doings." And that he reproveth his fellow, and would fain have reduced him; which is another: "Fearest thou not God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" And, that he pleadeth for the innocency of Christ; which is a third: "This man hath done nothing amiss." And in what words and meditations he spent the three or four hours more, that he hung alive upon the cross, it is easy to conjecture, though the evangelist hath spoken nothing of it.

The great sum and tenor of the gospel is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And, as Christ himself did seal the truth of the gospel with his own death, so was he pleased, that that main truth of the gospel should be proved and confirmed by this noble and notable example, even whilst he was dying. And, accordingly, it hath pleased the Spirit of God to give a demonstration of this man's believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, more copiously and apparently than of his repentance; though he hath given very fair demonstration of that also: that as all posterity was to read that great doctrine of 'believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation,' so they might have this illustrious and lively commentary of the truth and proof of it in this man's believing, and in his salvation.

And now, having seen this great monument of faith, and repentance, and pardon, what say we to it? As the evangelists tell us, that they that had seen the passages at Christ's death, returned from the cross, "striking upon their breasts;" and no doubt very full of cogitations;—so, what are the thoughts of our hearts upon this passage, which was not the



least remarkable among them? A great matter, that the light of the sun should be so darkened; and not a small, that such a dark soul should be so enlightened. A great matter, that the earth should quake, the rocks rend, and the veil of the temple be torn from top to bottom; and not a small matter, that such a stupid soul should be moved, that such a strong heart should be dissolved, broken, and brought to softness. The spectators then present considered of *those* things: our present work is to consider of *these*: and what do we think of them?

I move not the question without reason, because many men assume vain hopes from such demonstrations of mercy, as these, without any ground. Therefore, instead of looking what use may be made of this passage, let us consider that we make not an abuse of it. And the apostle Peter<sup>a</sup> gives the proper reason of it, "Because they wrest the Scripture to their own destruction." Here are things recorded, indeed, that may justly be admired for their excellency by men and angels,—the wondrous power of grace in converting such a sinner,—the wondrous readiness of Christ in pardoning such a sinner,—and the infinite mercy of God in saving such a sinner. And yet, even manna itself, the bread of angels, proves worms and rottenness and stink to those, that use it not aright; as well as it proves wholesome and pleasant food to those that do.

It is but too common with the rotten heart of man to misconstrue such demonstrations of mercy to the more boldness in sinning, and to make most base conclusions from most noble premises. Here is a great and notorious sinner pardoned; he is pardoned upon his first begging of pardon; he begged not pardon, till he was just in dying, and yet was pardoned. And, therefore, thinks the carnal heart, "I hope, I shall as easily obtain pardon; and, though I put off my seeking of pardon still and still, yet I hope I shall find it as well as he, when I seek it."—And men that put off repentance, and seeking pardon and salvation, from day to day, and from year to year, do but speak too plain, that they are of the same thoughts, though their tongue do not confess; and, it may be, their hearts take no notice of it neither.

II. The thief's petition we may the better understand, if we consider some doctrines of the Jewish nation, in which

<sup>a</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 16.



he was trained in his religion, if he had any at all; which, laid against his present thoughts, will make his petition appear the more pious.

I. It was the common doctrine in their schools and pulpits, that ‘a condemned malefactor, when he was to go to execution, if he made but confession of his sins, that that and his death did expiate for his sins.’—To that doctrine, about death’s expiating for sin, which was their doctrine in that case and all others, do those words of our Saviour relate, when he saith, “The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, neither in this life, nor in that which is to come.” Which words Papists abuse, to maintain forgiveness of sins, by purgatory, in the world to come: whereas our Saviour’s meaning is,—that it shall never be forgiven, neither before death, nor by death itself,—as the Jews held it might.

Now, it is very likely, this man had been at his confession; and, by his confession, had been encouraged to expect expiation of his sin, by that and by his death. But now, that serveth not his turn, his mind is not satisfied with that; but he finds something else is needful,—viz. To trust in the Messiah, and to be saved by him. And, therefore, being satisfied now, that Christ is *he*, he addresseth himself to him in that petition, that “he would remember him,” and that, through him, he might find and obtain salvation. For to that tenor does his request run, “Lord, remember me,” &c.

II. It was the common doctrine of the nation, That ‘they needed nothing from Messiah for redemption; but only that he would deliver them from their dispersion, and from under the yoke of the heathen.’—They speak this out in plain terms in their writings. For, as for ‘justification’ and ‘salvation,’ they thought they could do that by their own works. And as for teaching and instruction, they concluded that they had as much as they needed, or as could possibly be contributed to them, by their traditions,—which, they dreamed, God delivered to Moses, at mount Sinai.

But this man, you see, looks upon the deliverance by the Messiah with another kind of eye: he values it at its proper rate; viz. That his redemption is the ‘redemption of souls;’ that it is, as the apostle most truly calls it, “eternal redemption:” and, thereupon, he bequeaths his departing soul to his goodness for its eternal welfare.



III. The Scriptures had taught, that Messias should have a kingdom, and their schools had taught,—that ‘this kingdom must be an earthly, pompous, flourishing, kingdom;’ that ‘he should restore the kingdom to Israel,’ as the apostles fancy, Acts i. 6; and that ‘Israel should enjoy that kingdom in all worldly prosperity, and earthly flourishing.’—But this man, you see, looks upon his kingdom under another notion: he looks for his reigning in heaven, rather than upon earth, and his saints’ reigning there eternally with him. And, accordingly, he begs, that he may obtain that like felicity from him, and that he may have interest in that blessedness; “Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

Who taught him this wisdom, we need not to ask, if we but consider who or what it was, that brought him to his conversion. Divine grace must have the honour of all attributed to it: and so, no doubt, did he attribute it with all his soul, and ascribed it to his divine goodness: whose farther goodness he still begs, that he would consummate that grace in glory, and complete, what he had begun, in his everlasting kingdom.

And now look upon the man thus converted, thus enlightened, and thus praying, and we may say of him, as our Saviour of the Syro-Phœnician woman, the title of the sex only changed, “O *man*, great is thy faith!”

II. In our Saviour’s answer, we may observe his ready granting the thief’s petition, and his assuring the man, that it was granted. His ‘granting’ of it,—“Thou shalt be with me in paradise:” his ‘readiness’ of granting it, that it should be accomplished that very day,—“This day shalt thou be with me:” and his giving him ‘assurance’ of it,—“Verily, I say unto thee.”

What is meant by ‘paradise,’ hath been some dispute: some not thinking it means the ‘complete state of blessedness in heaven,’ but something short of it; but how much short of it, it is not worth the examining. I believe, the blessed apostle (that was rapt into the third heaven, or into paradise; and he makes them one and the same thing) would determine the question after another manner,—and assure us, that where he heard those unutterable things that he heard, was in the highest heavens, where is the throne of God, and the habitation of the blessed.



When I think of men's wresting such passages of mercy, as these, to their own destruction, I remember that cross conclusion, that the chief-priests and scribes make upon very good premises, Acts iv. 16; "That, indeed, a notable miracle is done by these men, is manifest to all them that dwell at Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it." What then? Therefore, let us take care, that "this doctrine spread no farther." Whereas, the direct contrary had been the proper inference; viz. 'Let us take care not to hinder it.' So that, indeed, a notable and renowned miracle of grace and pardon is showed here, is manifest to all the world, and all generations: what, then, is the conclusion, that such men make upon it? 'Therefore, we hope, we shall get pardon and salvation with little ado: and, if we put off the seeking of it till our death-bed, we hope we may find it then, as this man did.' Whereas, the proper conclusion should be to no other tenor,—viz. 'Why should I sin against such a God, that is so good and merciful?'—Let us consider of two or three things:—

First, Monuments of mercy were never set up in Scripture to be encouragements of presumption, and examples of pardon never recorded to state the rate and price of pardon. David's conclusion is, "There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared<sup>c</sup>." But God never showed mercy, that he might be made the more bold withal, and the less feared. And the inference he makes upon the pardon of his sin, is this; "I acknowledged my sin, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." What use is here for others to make of that example? "For this, shall every man, that is godly, make his prayer in a time, when thou mayest be found<sup>d</sup>:" and not put it off to what time he himself shall find, he knows not when. Whosoever is emboldened, by this rare example before us, to think he shall so easily obtain his pardon, though he put off the earnest business of it to a sick-bed; let him but hit on such a nick of time as this man did, and he may possibly speed. But it was such a nick of time as the world never saw, nor ever must see, the like: the very instant of time, when pardon and salvation were purchasing. And whereas he looks upon the thief's sin so easily pardoned, and thinks his own may be so too;—let him bring the same faith and repentance, that he did; and he may be likely pardoned as readily as he. For herein are men deceived

<sup>c</sup> Psal. cxxx. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Psal. xxxii. 5, 6.



about the facility of pardon, that, because God can easily forgive sin, therefore it is easy to get sin forgiven : and, because he hath so readily forgiven others, therefore he will as readily forgive me. As if no difficulty else lay in the way. Whereas,

Secondly, The great difficulty is to get the party fit and capable of pardon and salvation : for that is an ointment not to be poured into every vessel. There is no sin but it may be pardoned, if it can be repented of ; but all the business is to get repentance. The Scripture tells you of two sins unpardonable, the “sin against the Holy Ghost,” Mark iii ; and the “sin unto death,” or final apostasy, 1 John v. Now, the reason of the unpardonableness of these sins, lay in the men themselves, that were guilty of them,—viz. because they were past repentance ; and so the sins could not be pardoned, because they could not be repented of. There are thousands in hell, whose sins in themselves were pardonable, and had been pardoned,—had not they themselves been the cause, why they were not pardoned, because they did not repent of them.

If I were to answer this question, ‘What hope the greatest sinners may have of the pardon of their greatest sinning?’ I might reckon up how great sins and sinners have been pardoned, from Adam upward. But this doth not reach the question. For the question is not, ‘Whether such sins be pardonable,’ nor ‘Whether God be able to forgive them ;’ but, ‘What hope may the party have of pardon, being such a sinner?’ For, in this case, something more is to be looked at, than either God’s power or his mercy, and than either the quality of sin or the quantity : and this *something more* is a man’s coming into the way and capacity of pardon. When our Saviour prays for the forgiveness of those that crucified him, he never meant they should be forgiven, while they continued in their cruelty, wickedness, and unbelief ; but that they might be brought into a composure and capacity fit for forgiveness.

Thirdly, The *providence* of God was never the rule for men to go by, but his *word*. It were not good sense to say, that God’s extraordinary actings should be men’s ordinary rule. He that would not plough nor sow, but expect bread to be rained for him from heaven, because God once rained manna upon Israel,—may sit and starve : and he that will look for ravens to bring him bread and flesh, morning and



evening, because they did once so to Elias,—may walk with a hungry belly, but he will never be fed.

God's extraordinary actings are peculiarly for the magnifying of his own glory, but never were intended for man's rule to go by. They show what God can do; but little intend, that man should either expect the like, or do the like. Here was a most singular acting of God, to pardon and save such a wretch as this, who had put off his repentance to the very last; because there was an extraordinary occasion in hand, and because God would signally glorify the death of Christ. He that puts off his repentance, and seeks for pardon, to the very last, in reliance upon this example, does but tempt God,—and turns that to his own poison, which God intended for a better end. And he forsakes the bridge, that would carry him safe over Jordan, and ventures to go through the river to his own drowning; expecting a miracle for the drying of it up, because it was once dried up before the children of Israel.

God hath appointed the ways and means to come to repentance; and those we are to wait upon: and if he brought this man to repentance by a way extraordinary, we have to admire the peculiar dispensation of his grace, but still to have an eye to our own rule.

The mercies of God are never recorded in Scripture for man's presumption, and the failings of men never for imitation. Here is the memorial of a singular *mercy* of God, in saving this sinner: and a *failing* of this man, that he never sought salvation till this very instant. Now, he makes but an evil application, that resolves to imitate his failing, and yet hopes to speed as he did, who had an unparalleled mercy: and whom God would set up for a monument to all generations, not for men's presuming upon mercy, because of this mercy,—nor to imitate the delay of repentance in this man; but rather, from God's mercy, he should be stirred up the more unto it.

For the stating of the sure grounds, whereupon a man may comfortably hope and expect pardon and salvation at the hands of God, it were a mad doing, to lay for the two corner-stones in such a building, 'presumption upon mercy,' and 'delaying of repentance.' This is worse than building upon the sand; for this is building upon impiety.

Now, the word of God, which is to be our rule, tells us these two things:—



1. That repentance is the gift of God, as well as pardon. It is he, that “pours out the Spirit of grace and supplication<sup>d</sup>.”—“Him God hath exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins<sup>e</sup>.” Therefore, that man takes the interest of God and Christ out of their hands, that presumes he shall give himself repentance; and that, when he pleaseth. Can such a man give himself life, when God will not give it? health, when God will not give it? and can he give himself repentance, when God will not give it?—They, in the apostle James, that say, “To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such or such a city,” &c, are justly confuted, by the uncertainty of their life; that can so little maintain it, that cannot tell how long or little it shall be maintained. So those that promise to themselves repentance the next year, or the other,—besides, that they cannot promise to themselves to live to such a time; and if they do, can they any more give themselves repentance then, than they can now? Or can they presume, God will give them repentance then any more than now? I remember that passage of the apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 25, “If, peradventure, God will give them repentance.” If the apostle put it to a *peradventure*, whether God will give them repentance,—I dare say it is past all *peradventure*, they cannot give it themselves.

It is God that gives repentance, as well as he gives pardon. For he, and he only, is the giver of all grace: and repentance is the gift of sanctifying grace, as pardon is of justifying.

2. He hath set conditions, upon which to give repentance: a rule whereby to come to repentance, as well as he hath set repentance the rule whereby to come to pardon. And his rule is, ‘Take God’s time, as well as take God’s way.’ His way is to attend upon his word, that calls for repentance; to cast away every thing, that may hinder repentance. So his time is, ‘Betake to repentance, when God calls for repentance.’ And that is this day,—this very hour,—every day,—every hour. We hear of “to-day,” and “while it is called to-day,” in the claiming of man’s duty; but we never hear of “to-morrow,” or the next day,—much less of the next month, or next year,—or I know not how long to come.

<sup>d</sup> Zech. xii. 10.

<sup>e</sup> Acts, v. 31.



However this man in the text neglected God's time all his life, and yet sped well enough at his latter end, because God would make him a singular example of God's mercy and Christ's purchase and triumph;—yet canst thou find no reason in the world to expect the like mercy, if thou neglectest God's time; unless thou canst think of God's setting thy name in the Bible for a monument to all posterity, as he did this man's. The rule of our duty, is that we go by,—and not by providence, especially miraculous and extraordinary. Now, the rule of our duty teacheth, that we delay not any time, but to it “to-day, while it is called to-day.” And as our Saviour's lesson is about “not taking care for to-morrow,” in respect of food and clothing; so we may say, ‘We are not to put off the care till to-morrow, in respect of repentance and amendment.’

*Object.* But do you think, that death-bed repentance never speeds well? There have been many, that have not betaken themselves to repentance, nay, nor ever thought of repenting, till death hath been ready to seize on them; and yet then have showed great tokens of repentance, and have made a very hopeful end.

*Answer.* We must distinguish the rule of our ‘duty,’ and the rule of ‘judging others.’ The rule of our duty, is plain and legible: the rule of our judging others, is not so plain; if so be we have any rule at all, besides the rule of charity, which not seldom is mistaken. It is not for us, in such cases, to be so wise as either to limit God, or to be too confident of our own determinations, or too ready to judge. The words of our Saviour may hint unto us a good caution in this case, John xxi. 22: “What is that to thee? follow thou me:” be not inquisitive after other men's occasions, but mind thine own.—And this may be very pertinent counsel. Venture not salvation upon such late repentance; and venture not to have the question determined in your case, but keep to the stated and fixed rule.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

ACTS, XXIII. 8.

*For the Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.*

Two parties mentioned in the text, that are oft mentioned, and oft mentioned together in several other places in the New Testament,—viz. the Pharisees and Sadducees: Simeon and Levi. Brethren in evil, though at enmity among themselves: Samson's foxes looking with their faces several ways,—but their tails meeting together in heresy and mischief. Their doctrine different in many particulars; but both corrupt leaven, and equally to be “taken heed of<sup>b</sup>.” Their manners different, and their hearts envious one against another: yet both agreeing to be vexatious to Christ, and both proving alike a generation of vipers<sup>c</sup>.

Parties that differed not only about this article of religion,—viz. the resurrection and the world to come; but that differed even about the whole frame of religion. For the Pharisees would have their religion to be built upon traditions: and the Sadducees would admit of no traditions at all. The Pharisees admitted all the books of the Old Testament to be read in the synagogue: the Sadducees, the Books of Moses only. The Sadducees sound in this particular, that they would not admit of traditions, as the Pharisees did: but as unsound again, in that they would not acknowledge the resurrection. The Pharisees sound in that particular, in that they acknowledged the resurrection, which the Sadducees did not: but as unsound again, in that they so doted upon traditions, as they did;—both erring from the truth, and not a little; and both maintaining opinions directly contrary to the way of salvation; and directly contrary to one another.

It is a saying of the Jewish writers, and is very true, That “after the death of the latter prophets, Zechariah and Malachi, the spirit of prophecy departed from Israel, and

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1278.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xvi. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. iii. 7.



went up." So that there was no prophet thenceforward among them, no vision, no revelation, no oracle by Urim and Thummim, at the least for four hundred years, till the rising of the gospel. Ah! poor nation, how art thou stripped of thy great jewel and privilege, the spirit of prophecy and revelation! What will now become of thee, when thy prophets are gone, and such divine guides and teachers are no more! Time was, when thou mightest, in thy doubting, have recourse to them, and they could resolve thee: in thy fear, have recourse to their prayers, and they would prevail for thee: in thy desire to know the mind of God, and they would inform thee. But now, what will become of thee, when those thy treasures, those thy teachers, are no more!

Why, naught became of them. For presently, after the death of those prophets, and the departure of the spirit of prophecy, the nation parted into two deadly heresies,—viz. the Pharisees, "teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men<sup>d</sup>;" and the Sadducees, teaching for doctrines the very dictates of devils; that "there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, nor world to come."

I. The first thing that I observe hence, is, that two such different parties should be in the nation together, should sit as they do here, in council together: so great a difference betwixt the parties, and a continual contestation about that difference: and yet both parties admitted to be in the church, to bear office in the church, and to sit judges in the great council.

There were Sadducee-priests, as well as Pharisee. And the Jews' records have a story of a Sadducee-priest, that was to offer the drink-offering upon the altar, at the feast of tabernacles: and because he missed something of doing exactly as he should have done, all the company present fell a-pelting him with pomecitrons, which every one used to carry at the feast. And there were Sadducee magistrates and judges, as well as Pharisee. And the Jews' records do give us notice, that there was once a time, that the great council at Jerusalem consisted almost all of Sadducees, if not altogether. In reading of the context at your leisure, you will see, that in that great council now, as Paul stands before it, there were not a few Sadducees, as well as there were divers of the other sect.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. xv. 9.



And what toleration there was of a dissenting party in that church, is worth the considering of those, that have to dispute about that case.

II. Another gloss, that I should make upon both these opinions, should be this question,—‘ Was it possible, that a Sadducee and a Pharisee should be saved? ’—Some will maintain, that a man may be saved in any religion, in any opinion, so that he live honestly towards men, and devoutly towards God. Whereas a man may take up an opinion and belief, which may put such a bar against his salvation, as to make it impossible for him to be saved, let him live never so honestly. For it is not bare civil honesty, nor blind devotion, will bring to heaven.

Let a Sadducee live never so honestly, never so devoutly,—was it not utterly impossible for him to be saved, while he held the opinions, that he did, which were directly against salvation? And a Pharisee,—while he made it the great article of his faith, that he could be justified and saved by his own works,—put a bar against all possibility of his justification and salvation.

Men think it a small thing, to be meddling with this or that new strange opinion; or (should I not say?) they think it a great thing, a brave matter, to invent and vent some new opinion or other; when that very thing and opinion may be the very lock, and key, and bar, to keep them out of heaven. Instance and example of such opinions might be given in men of several professions and religions in too great plenty: but we will look more particularly on this before us: “ The Sadducees say, There is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit.”

The Sadducees here are marked for their heretical opinions about some main articles of faith: and it gives us occasion,

I. To observe, that they denied such articles.

II. To consider the articles they denied.

I. As to the first, we may first remember that saying of the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 19: “ For there must be heresies among you; that they, that are approved, may be made manifest among you.” That is a sad accent, “ there must be heresies.” And whence comes that *must be*, or that necessity? Hath God any hand in it, that it must be, because he will have it? Or is there any such necessity, that it must



be, because the church hath need of heresies?—There must be weeds in the garden. Is it, because the garden hath need of weeds? It hath need of weeding, rather than of weeds. But the *must be* proceedeth from the corruption of men of evil minds, that will raise up heresies. And it cannot be otherwise, while their minds are, and will be, so evil. That we may take some view of this unhappy necessity, proceeding from such an unhappy cause, let us gradually observe these things:—

I. That God gives forth his word and truth to men authoritatively, that men should believe them at their peril. He sends forth his word, not to go a-begging for belief of it and obedience to it: but let men disbelieve and disobey it at their peril; “Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, yet shall they know, that there hath been a prophet among them<sup>e</sup>.” And let them answer it, according as they have received him.

II. Now, the causes of men’s not believing the word, and not obeying the truth, are in themselves, and not at all in God. He that gave his word to be believed and obeyed, would not be the cause, that it should not be believed nor obeyed. It is the wickedness of men’s own hearts, that causeth it: and it is the voluntary doing of their hearts not to obey it. It is said, John xii. 39, “They could not believe;” but the first cause was, because they would not believe: and so, by the continual practice of not willing to believe, they came to the fatal distemper, that “they could not believe.” The prophet Isaiah<sup>f</sup> crieth out, “Who hath believed our report?”—Why, nobody.—And what is the reason? Was not the word worth believing? Or, could they say, they could not believe it? The truth was, they had no mind to it. They had a mind against it. They, in Jeremiah, chap. xlii, deal plainly, and speak out, “We will not hear the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken to us.” And what was their reason? They had no mind to it, because it was not to their mind. Now, had they been disputed with, and questioned, ‘Do you not think, that God is wiser than you? Are not his counsels better than your counsels, and the words of his mouth more to be valued, than the suggestions of your hearts?’ what answer do they make?—‘Be it what it will, we will have our own minds.’

<sup>e</sup> Ezek. i.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. liii.



This is the cause of the *must be*, because men will have it so; and no persuasion to the contrary can prevail with them. "We have the mind of Christ," is the apostle's rejoicing: but "we will have our own minds," is the world's language and practice. And upon this mad wilfulness it is, that 'there must be heresies.'

III. Now, it is too tedious to inquire into all the immediate causes and originals of heresies, they are so many. The father of them was an Amorite, and the mother a Hittite; the whole breed a Canaanite, a cursed generation; a monstrous generation; bred very oft of clean contraries; bred ever of what is contrary to right and good. Sometimes heresy is bred of ignorance; sometimes, of too much knowledge; sometimes, of too much carelessness about the word of God; sometimes, of too much curiosity; sometimes, of leaning too much to sense; and sometimes, too much to carnal reason: most commonly, of pride,—of men's seeking themselves,—of crossness,—of boldness about divine things; and ever of men's wilfulness to have their own minds.

Might I not instance and give example in all these things? And hath not the church had too sad experience of these things in all generations? Weeds ever creeping up in that garden out of one piece of cursed ground or other, and is never free of them. "There must be heresies," saith the apostle: "there have been heresies," saith experience; and "there will be heresies," saith the corrupt nature and heart of man, that will be seeking itself, and hath no mind of obeying the truth. Weighty is that saying of the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11; "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for this cause, God sends them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." It is more proper to say (and it is more commonly done), that men rather fall into heresy, than that heresy falls upon them:—that is, that they rather choose it themselves, than that they are any way enforced to it. 'Heresy' is a Greek word, put into an English dress: and the word in Greek, as grammarians will tell you, signifies a 'wish,' a 'choice.' Heresy is a thing, that a man takes up of his own wish and choice. And I think it might be a disputable point,— "Whether a heretic ever took up and maintained his opinions, purely out of conscience?"—

The great heresy abroad, in one party, is Popery. And



can I or you believe, that the ringleaders of that religion, that lead the poor silly people blindfold, do maintain that religion purely out of the principles of a good conscience;—when we see, they make no conscience of massacres, powder-plots, killing kings, and disquieting kingdoms?

The great heresy abroad, in another party, is Socinianism. And can I think or believe, that the ringleaders in that doctrine do maintain that doctrine purely out of the principles of conscience; when even the whole system and body of that divinity doth clearly speak itself to be a crossing even all the articles of religion, of what hath been received for sound and orthodox in the church in all ages?

And I must be excused, if I take Quakerism to be a direful heresy, and that it is hard to find out that the ringleaders in it do maintain it purely out of the principles of conscience; while they are so bitter, high, cross, and censorious. You remember the saying of the apostle<sup>s</sup>, “The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated.” If their wisdom or profession carry those marks,—and if their doctrine carry even any badge of truth,—we do not yet understand it, or them.

And as for the heresy that the text speaks of, the Sadducees’ denying those great articles of religion, the resurrection, angels, and spirits:—can we think they maintained their opinions merely out of the principles of conscience; and not rather out of faction, sectarism, or some other by-respect and regard? Our Saviour chargeth them with ignorance in the Scripture, and in judging concerning God. “Do ye not err (saith he), not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God?” And is it not very suspicious, that there was wilfulness in the matter too, that they were resolved to stick to their opinion for some by-ends, that they had, of their own?

Let us a little consider of the persons, and then of their opinions:—

I. Of the persons. We read not of Sadducees, but under the second temple, or after the return out of captivity: but when, and how, they rose then, is something questionable.

Some think, there were Sadducees in the time of Ezra, and the prophets that lived after the captivity, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. And they think that those words,



Mal. iii. 13, "Your words are stout against me," do refer to the Sadducees. And there are of the Jewish writers that say, that, in the time of Ezra, there were Sadducees, that denied the world to come. And, therefore, to affront that heresy, they of the great council ordained, that, in the end of some prayers, instead of saying 'Amen,' they should say, 'For ever and ever:' as, instead of 'Blessed be the Lord, Amen,' they should say, 'Blessed be the Lord לְעֵלָם עַלְמִים for ever and ever;' or, as the words do properly signify, 'To worlds of worlds,' or, 'To ages of ages.'

Others ascribe the original of Sadducees to a latter date: and that one Sadoc was the first author of the heresy, divers years after these holy prophets were dead and gone. Which opinion is most embraced both by Jews and Christians.

II. Well; be it the one way or the other; the first singularity of this sect was, that they would receive no point of faith, but what they could see plainly grounded in the Books of Moses. For the other books of the Old Testament they admitted not of, to be of such authority, as were the Books of Moses. And, because they could not find the 'resurrection,' and 'the world to come,' spoke of in plain terms in all Moses,—therefore, they would not take those articles into their creed.

They would be their own choosers; and what they will have to be Scripture, must be Scripture; and what they would not have, must not be,—the great cause of heresy, which we mentioned before, men's wilfulness to have their own minds. It is a blessed thing to be led by Scripture; for that will lead to truth, and to heaven. But, on the contrary, a cursed thing to lead the Scripture, whither a man would have it: for that will certainly end in error and miscarriage.

It is but too common a thing, for men to take up an opinion or doctrine of their own heads or minds, and such as pleases themselves: and then to lead and strain the Scripture to speak to their opinion, and to maintain it: to make the divine oracles of God to truckle to their fancies. Like that, that Solomon accounts so absurd and preposterous; "to set servants on horseback, and princes to lackey by their horses' side," and to trudge a-foot. These Sadducees had learned from their master Sadoc, that there was no resurrection, nor world to come. And to maintain that opinion, they will make so bold with Scripture, that that, which



speaks not plainly of those things, shall be Scripture,—but that that does, shall not be at all.

How the church of Rome dealeth in this kind, is very well known. That church hath taken up cursed and abominable opinions and doctrines: and she cries down the Scriptures, and would not have them meddled with. And you know, who, among us, talk so much of the light within them as all-sufficient for their guidance and salvation; and how they undervalue the Scriptures by that very opinion: but yet will own, and wrest, and strain, the Scriptures, where they think it may serve their opinion. Men will have their own minds; and would have every thing to serve their humour, and to maintain their conceits.

The Arian and Socinian will have Christ to be a creature, and not God; the Holy Ghost a creature, and not God. What do they gain by this, towards heaven? Do they not set themselves farther off, when they make him, that should redeem them, but a creature like themselves;—and him that should sanctify them, to be but a creature like themselves? But they must have their own minds.—These Sadducees, what gained they by their opinion against the resurrection, and world to come? What either profit, or credit, or comfort, could their opinion carry with it; that men should die like dogs, or other beasts, and there is an end of them? But they must have their own minds.

And, it is like, they were well content, there should be no resurrection, nor world to come: for this opinion might very well serve a voluptuous life. For a man to live as he pleased in all voluptuousness, and pleasure, and to hear no more of it; never to be judged, or called to account, for what he had done;—this is a brave opinion to maintain lust and looseness, and all manner of villany. They, in Isa. xxii. 13, cry, “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.” One would think, they should have been in another tune, when they thought death was so near; and left their jovializing to-day, when they think they must die to-morrow. But, dying was all the business they looked on, and looked no farther. That was bitter to think of, when they must perish with all their delights, and pleasures, and braveries; but beyond death they little thought of any thing. And so historians report of the Egyptians, that, when they were feasting, and in the height of their frolic and joviality, a man brought in a dead man’s



skull, and showed it to every one of them, with these words added, "Eat and drink, and make merry; for you know not, how soon you may be like to this." One would think, that the sight of such a spectacle should have called them to repentance, and mourning, and weeping, and girding with sackcloth: but they aimed it a clean contrary way:—viz. that since they were sure they should die, they should take as much pleasure as they could, while they lived; and lose no time from their voluptuousness, because they knew not how long, or short, their time might be, and how soon they might be cut off from those delights.

It is more than probable, that the Sadducees maintained their opinion to the like purpose; and were very well content to forego the world to come, that they might the freer, and with less disquieture, enjoy this. The Pharisee fasted, and was of a strict and severe life and conversation; but the Sadducee thought it more delightful to live more at large, and not to deprive himself of those contents and pleasures, that he might have here. And it is more than probable, that he so maintained his opinion upon that account: at least his opinion did suit most properly with such a course.

The Sadducees' denying of the resurrection, may justly mind us to make it our hope and awe, unless we also should be Sadducees. Let me use the strain of Paul to Agrippa,—Men and brethren, "do you believe a resurrection? I know, you believe it."—May I add and say, 'I know, you remember it?' This I dare say, that if you do not, I know you have no cause not to remember it. A thing of the greatest concernment, that ever will befall you: a thing as sure to come to you, as you are sure you have come hitherto: a thing that you can as little avoid, as you can avoid death; and a thing that must determine of your eternal state. And, do you not remember it? I am sure we all have cause to remember it.

The prayer of Moses for the people is very reasonable, pathetic, and affectionate, Deut. xxxii. 29: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Do you not consider this out of these words, that 'they that are not wise, do not consider this;' and, out of the thing itself we are speaking of, that the resurrection is our latter end, beyond our latter end? Death is our latter end; but the resurrection is a 'latter end' beyond it. And, if the continual remembrance of death be needful



(as who will deny it?), the continual remembrance of the resurrection is as needful. I had almost said, Is more needful; according to the rate that most men think of death. "Oh! how bitter is the remembrance of death to them, that are at ease," and in earthly prosperity. But upon what account? Because they must part with all their delights here, and must be no more, as they have been, jocund, and jovial, and florid. The Roman emperor of old, spoke not only his own sense, but the sense of others, when, dying, he cried out, "Ah! poor soul, whither must thou go now? Thou must never jest more, nor enjoy thy pleasures more, as thou hast done." So they thought of death, but as an end and determining of their bravery here. But the resurrection must determine of their state for ever hereafter. And, if Solomon's whips be whips, Rehoboam's whips are scorpions. If death be so sharp to them, to part them from their present delights,—what will the resurrection be, that will state them in a state undelightsome for ever?

Oh! how many sins might we have avoided in the course of our lives, if we had had the serious remembrance and apprehension of the resurrection! And how many might we yet avoid! In the midst of all our security, and mirth, and music, to have this, as Belshazzar's hand-writing upon the wall, in our eye,—'But will this hold in the day of resurrection? Will this follow me in another world?' In the midst of our pride and bravery to think, 'Shall I be so dressed at the resurrection at the last day?' And, 'Will this gallantry stand me in any stead in that day?' I cannot but fancy how a Sadducee, that denies the resurrection, or any that are mindless of it, will be surprised at that day. He thought none should ever rise from the dead at all; and he himself will be raised, whether he will or no. "Oh! let me lie still in the dust," will his heart cry; "Let the earth cover me, and the mountains and rocks lie upon me."—"No," will the alarm of the great trump sound, 'arise, thou wretch, and come to judgment.'—And thou must come, and no avoiding; Eccles. xi. 9, "Know, that, for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment." He will do it, and thou canst not hinder him.

II. And so much concerning the first article, that a Sadducee put out of his creed; he would not own, that there will be any resurrection. It follows, "Neither angel, nor spirit." Now, why he should deny this, is a great deal



harder to find out, than to find out why he denied the resurrection. For *that* he denied, because he could not find mention of it in plain terms in all Moses: but he finds mention of 'angels and spirits' in terms plain enough there.

There is, indeed, no mention in Moses of the creation of angels, in the history of the creation. And that might haply give the Sadducee occasion to think, there were no such creatures made. But then what will he say, when he meets with the mention of angels so frequently after; Gen. xxxii. 1: "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And Jacob called the name of that place Mahanaim; that is, two armies:"—viz. the army of the angels that met him, and the other army, or great train of his own family. An army of angels then, and not one now! "Thousands of angels at Sinai," Deut. xxxiii. 2: and not one extant now! What, could a Sadducee think, was become of those angels, of which there is so frequent mention in Moses? Were they dead, and not in being? or were they confined to heaven, and no more to converse with men? It is not easy to unriddle a heretic's fancy, a Sadducee's mystery. And it is very excusable ignorance, to be ignorant of the depths of Satan, of the depths of a Sadducean heretic.

There is not, indeed, mention of 'spirits' in Moses in such plain terms, but only of the 'Spirit of God,' and the 'spirit of men.' But though there were no more, yet one would have thought that enough, to have stopped his mouth, that he should not say, "There was no spirit:" when it is said in the very second verse in all Moses, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters:" and, Num. xxvii. 16, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation."

I. The first thing that offers itself to our consideration in this case, is, the distinction that is here made betwixt angels and spirits;—"Neither angel nor spirit." And in the next verse, the Pharisees cry out, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or angel have spoken to him, let us not fight against God." Where the question is,—"What is meant by a 'spirit' thus distinguished from 'angels,' when the angels themselves are called spirits?"—A farther distinction of the Jews, may help to clear this. They in their writings thus distinguish, "Angels, and spirits, and devils." And among other sayings, that hold out this distinction,



they have this, "All things are subservient to the will and command of the holy blessed God, angels, and spirits, and devils." Where, what is meant by 'angels' and 'devils,' is easy to understand; but what is meant by 'spirits,' when so distinguished from both?—viz. walking ghosts of the dead, as they supposed, or spectra appearing in the shape of this or that person, that was dead. So the appearing of a representation of Samuel, raised by the witch of Endor, they would account a spirit. And that remarkable passage, Luke xxiv. 36, 37; "As they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you.' But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit." That is, 'They did not think, that it was Jesus in his own person, that stood in the midst of them, but some apparition only in his shape.'

Now the Pharisees thought there were such ghosts and apparitions: and so did the heathen also conceive. And Tully, a heathen, from that very thing, doth plead the immortality of the soul. "For (saith he), since men that are dead, appear to the living,—it is a sign that they also live, though they be dead: and that they are not quite extinguished."

That there have been, and may be, such apparitions, there is no question, and histories give us some instances in this kind. As, one among many, that famous story of the ghost of Julius Cæsar, after his being murdered in the senate, appearing to Brutus, who had had a chief hand in the murder, and telling him, "Videbis me apud Philippos," "Thou shalt see me again at Philippi." And so he did.

And the very forbidding of necromancy in Scripture, doth argue, that there may be such apparitions; Deut. xviii. 10, 11, "There shall not be found among you an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." Now, what is a 'necromancer?' The very Greek word speaks it, that it is 'one that consults or asks counsel of the dead;' as the witch of Endor would do of Samuel. And there is a hint of such a thing, Isa. viii. 19; "Should not a people seek unto their God? Should they seek for the living to the dead?"

Now, though the Pharisees, with the law, condemned this wickedness and witchcraft of consulting the dead;—yet, if any such apparition offered itself voluntary without



such calling forth by sorcery, they accounted it to be hearkened to. Therefore, they say, "If a spirit or an angel have spoken to him, let us not fight against God." But the Sadducees denied, there was any such thing as spirit or angel.

II. Where a second question ariseth,—'Whether they thought, there were no such incorporeal substances, as angels or spirits:—or, 'Whether their meaning was, that the appearing of angels and spirits was now ceased, and to be no more.'

There is an expression, something like this latter, John vii. 39: "The Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified."—"The Holy Ghost was not yet;" for so the original Greek hath it exactly. And was there ever a time, when the Holy Ghost was not in being? Our English hath well resolved it, in adding one word, "The Holy Ghost was not yet *given*." He was in being from all eternity; but he was not given and bestowed upon men, as he was to be, when Jesus should be glorified. And so in that answer of certain Ephesians to Paul, Acts xix. 2, "We have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Ghost." Yes, they had heard that a thousand times over, that there was a Holy Ghost. But their meaning is, "We have not heard, whether he be restored again to Israel, since his departing away after the death of Zechariah and Malachi, and those last prophets." So, if the Sadducees did acknowledge such things in being, as angels and spirits; yet they might deny, that such things were in acting then. No appearing of angels and spirits then; for that was clean vanished.

It was most true, that, after the death of those last prophets, the spirit of prophecy and revelation departed from Israel, till the coming-in of the gospel:—for a matter of four hundred years, no vision, no prophecy, no appearing of angels, no oracle by Urim and Thummim, no extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. Samson's locks and strength shaved off and gone. And those great privileges, that that people had been blessed and honoured withal, clean departed and gone away. And hence it was, that the Samaritans durst compare with the Jews for the better religion; and mount Gerizim at Shechem compares with Jerusalem, as the truer and purer place of worship. For the honour and ornaments of Jerusalem were gone, her prophets and the spirit of prophecy.



III. It is observable, what is said in the last clause of the text, "The Pharisees confess both." Why, he had spoken of three things that the Sadducees denied, "the resurrection, angel, spirit." And, therefore, it seems more proper to have said, "The Pharisees confess all,"—when he speaks of three, than to say "they confess both," when he speaks of three. But he makes these two latter but as one; and so distinguishes the things into two parts: the resurrection was one thing the Sadducees denied, and angels and spirits was another one thing. And so, by the addition of the word *spirit*, he intimates, that the Sadducees denied all angelical and spiritual substance. And so expositors observe upon this: that he thought, that even God himself is not a spiritual, but a corporeal or bodily substance: that the good or evil angels that are mentioned, mean nothing but good and evil motions of men's minds: and that the soul of man is not a spirit, but a crasis or mixture of some certain humours and temperaments: and that by the 'Spirit of God,' is meant only his 'mind;' and by the 'spirit of man,' his 'breath.'

Strange and mad divinity and philosophy! And a strange world that this man conceives! A world that hath neither angel in it, nor devil: and only a corporeal god in it. Souls that are bodily in the midst of the body, and that must die as well as the body, when the body dies! And a world that must comprehend all, that ever must be! And that there is to be no world to come, nor any other world but this!

Men of gross and thick and muddy minds! that either could not believe but what they saw; or could not but believe, that what they saw not, was like to what they saw: that could not believe, that there were angels or spirits, because they saw them not; and could not but believe, that God and souls were like to bodily things that they saw.

Their sad and fatal case and blindness, may justly give us warning, and advise what clear minds we ought to get to judge of divine things, and rightly to apprehend of things, that are above sense or seeing. The greatest things of our concernment, are out of sight,—viz. God, our souls, guilt, grace, hell, heaven, and eternity,—to omit to speak of angels and devils. "We are not to look to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen," as the apostle gives us intimation, 2 Cor. iv. 18, and in divers other places.



Now, what are we to do in this case? Not believe them, because we do not see them? This is Thomas's faith, or infidelity rather, "not to believe that Christ is risen, unless we see in his hands the print of the nails." Or shall we cavil with God, for that he hath not made these things visible, and not laid them conspicuous to our eyes, as he hath done bodily things? God would be loved, served, feared. Why doth he not show himself visibly to us, that we might see him, and so love and serve and fear him? He would have us to avoid sin and guilt: if he had made these things visible, as a dangerous pit or gulf or precipice is visible, we should then avoid them. But now we must avoid a thing we see not. We are bidden to resist the devil. Why, we cannot see him, and we would not see him.—And we are bidden to take care of our souls. They are things invisible, and we cannot see, what they are, and how they are.

Yes; God hath given us an eye to see those things; an invisible eye to see things invisible. So it is said of Moses, that "he saw him, that was invisible." For the discerning of any thing, there are three things requisite; an eye to see,—and light to see by,—and a just or competent distance, that the thing, to be seen, be not too far; for then it is not to be seen. God hath provided for us all these things, for our seeing and knowing the things, which it concerns us to know, though they be invisible; if we be not wanting to ourselves.

How much is comprehended in those words of God, which he uses, when he is about to create man,—“Let us make man after our own image.” And ‘God made man after his own image.’ Now, you must refer this image or similitude more especially to the soul: for the body can little be said to be the image of God, who is not a body. But in how many things doth the soul resemble him?

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| God is | { | Invisible<br>Spirit<br>Immortal: | } | And so is the soul. |
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But more especially doth the soul resemble God in the faculty and constitution of the mind; God being a pure intellect or mind, and all-knowing; and, the mind of man representing him in its great capacity of knowledge and understanding. That the soul represents God in being invisible,



spiritual, immortal, as he is; we may call it, a 'passive' representation of God, pictured upon the constitution of the soul. But the soul's representing God in knowing, understanding, discerning of things, we may very properly call an 'active' representation of him: laying forth in action, as he also acteth. The serpent, in tempting Eve, concludes, that the proper and most complete resemblance of God is in knowledge: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And he guessed not amiss, as relating to that representation of God, that is in the essence of the soul. For observe that of the apostle, Col. iii. 10; "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him, that created him."

And the only specimen, or evidence, and declaration that Adam gave of the perfection of his nature, while he stood in innocency, was the demonstration of his wisdom or knowledge, in that he could, and did, name all creatures according to their nature. God brought all creatures to him, to see what he would name them: and he had the knowledge, upon the very first sight of them, to understand their nature; and he named them according to their nature. Knowledge and understanding was natural and essential to Adam, as he was a man, a reasonable creature. Therefore, by his fall he did not lose that faculty, though he abated of the measure of it. For it was essential to his soul to be an understanding soul, and it could not be a soul without it.

Let us compare the angels that fell, and Adam falling, together. They were both created holy and righteous alike. For I make no question, but Adam was created every whit as holy as those angels were created. And they were both created of great knowledge and understanding, but not both alike: for I make no question, but the angels were endued with the more knowledge. But how was it with them, when they fell?

First, They both did quite lose their holiness and righteousness: for that was not essential to their being, but additional to their perfection: and their perfection they lost by their fall; their essence and being they could not lose. Now, though they both alike lost, and quite lost, their holiness and righteousness; yet their loss of it was not alike. For the fallen angels lost also the capacity, the possibility, of ever being holy and righteous again: fallen man did not so.



Secondly, As to their knowledge and understanding, they neither of them utterly lost that; nor what they retained of that, did they retain alike. For fallen man lost the greatest and main part of that knowledge, wherein he was created; but the fallen angels lost not so much. Whatsoever they lost of the knowledge of spiritual things, they lost little of the knowledge of natural. But fallen man lost the knowledge of both. But he lost not the capacity of recovery of the better part,—viz. the knowledge of spiritual things again.

Those Hebrew words of Moses, Gen. i. 14, *יהי מאורות* which our English hath rendered, “Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven;” some would have rendered, “Let there be light-vats, or light-vessels;”—viz. to receive and hold that light, that had shone the three first days of the creation, before sun and moon were made. As if the sun and moon were not light bodies of themselves, but only bodies fitted to hold that light, that shone before. Our minds now, under our fall, God knows, are opacous and dark things; and we can know nothing, as we ought to know. But yet our minds are vessels capable to receive and hold that knowledge and understanding, that we have lost. And, it is not impossible for us to receive and recover that knowledge, the loss of which hath undone us. As the schools distinguish between ‘*potentia*’ and ‘*actus*,’ so are we here between ‘*capacity*’ and ‘*activity*.’ Our natural minds, as of themselves, are far from knowing spiritual things, as we ought to know them: but there is a possibility, a capability, in our minds to know them. Any one mind is able to receive and hold all the knowledge that is in the world, if God put it there.

The mind is capable to know things distant,—things out of sight,—things invisible,—all things, that are needful to be known,—and to know them, as they ought to be known.

And, if a Sadducee will not believe, what he cannot see, it is not through any incapability in his mind, wanting in the constitution of his soul; but it is through his own perverting of his mind, that he will not labour his mind to discern what he might do.

It is an old question in the schools, “*An animæ sint æquales*,” “Whether all souls are alike?” Is the soul of him that sits upon the throne, and of the servant behind the mill, alike? Are the souls of the learned doctors in the chair, and of him that could never read a letter, alike? “All souls are



mine," saith God, Ezek. xviii. And all souls are his alike under divers notions. But are all alike in themselves? Yes, as to the essential constitution of the soul, they are alike. The beggar's soul intellectual, spiritual, immortal, as well as the soul of the prince or potentate: the soul of the most unlearned, endued with will, with a conscience; aye, and with capacity of knowing, as well as the profoundest scholar:—viz. of knowing those things, that are needful for him to know;—if there be concurrence of those circumstances, that may bring that capacity into act.

IV. You know who they are, that cry up so much the "light within them." Which when they have made the best of they can, they can make no more of it, than the light of nature, which is but a dim light to lead to heaven. May we not distinguish between the light of morality, and the light of divinity? The light of nature is the light of morality. And even a natural, unregenerate person hath the light of morality within him; that teacheth him, "Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not kill, nor commit adultery, nor be a false witness," and "Thou shalt do to another, as thou wouldest be done to thyself." Though, too commonly, such persons put the light under a bed, or under a bushel. But can this light teach him the great mysteries of salvation,—grace, faith, justification, eternity, hell, and heaven? Another kind of light is required for this, than the dim candle of the light of nature. David made the 'word of God' the light to his feet, and the lantern to his paths; and the light within him did not serve his turn.

And the very reason, why both Sadducees and Pharisees fell, and continued in their error and blindness, was, because they would not use the Scripture for their guide to lead them better. The Sadducees refused the other parts of Scripture, besides Moses, which would have instructed them better about the resurrection and the world to come. And the Pharisees abused both Moses and the other parts of Scripture by their glosses and traditions; whereby they made them speak their own mind, and not the mind of God. And it is no wonder, if they both walked blindly in the dark, when they refused the light, that should have guided them.

V. It is true, that there is a capability, in the minds of all men, to know what they ought to know for their salvation: but that that capacity should come into act and reality, more is required than the mere composure of our natural minds.



For the apostle tells us, that “the natural man receiveth not the things of God; nor can he discern them, because they are spiritually to be discerned.” The lamps in the tabernacle and temple were to burn continually; but the priest was to dress them morning and evening, else they would not burn, as they should do. The mind or “spirit of man within him,” as Solomon tells us, “is the Lord’s candle.” But every man is to be a priest to himself in this regard, to dress and snuff and take care of this candle, that it may burn bright. For you read of a ‘corrupt’ mind, of a ‘fleshly’ mind, of a ‘vain’ mind: and such a candle is like to burn but coarsely, if there be not constant care to mend it.

VI. The word ‘mind,’ or the thing, the ‘mind of man,’ doth signify and import two things,—viz. the understanding, and the bent or inclination of the soul: the mind, and the spirit of the mind; as the apostle expresses it, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind,” Eph. iv. 23. The mind knows and understands such and such things; but the spirit of the mind may sway clean contrary to what it understands. And it is too commonly the cause of men’s erring about things of religion, that the bent of their mind is averse to embrace and receive that, that their mind doth or might know.

In a natural and unregenerate soul, the will generally sways both understanding and conscience. But, in a good soul, understanding and conscience sways the will; it is moved by those wheels, but it moves not them. You remember that saying of the apostle, “They would not receive the love of the truth, therefore,” &c.

And this is a very common cause of ignorance and error, because men will not know and embrace the truth. “My people love to have it so,” as God complains in the prophet. There is no ignorance like the ignorance, that is wilful; and none so blind as he, that will not see, but will put out his own eyes. These Sadducees might have seen better, might have known better; but they would not know, nor see. The Pharisees might have taught them better in those points, about which they erred; but they scorned to be taught by them. The word of God would have taught them better, if they would have embraced it: but they were prejudiced against it, and forestalled by their own opinion. They had drunk-in their error about “no resurrection, and no angel nor spirit,” from their teachers, and from their youth; and to that they will stick, and hear nothing against it. As he of



old, "Though I see reason in that thou teachest," when one taught the gospel, "yet I have been taught and trained up otherways; and there I must and will hold."

And this is all the reason, that the most, in the Romish religion, can give of their religion: it is the old religion, the religion in which their fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors, were born, bred, lived, and died; and by no means must they forsake their father's religion.—As he in the story, that professed that he would go to hell, whither, he was told, his ancestors were gone, because they were heathen,—rather than go to heaven alone.

In enumerating the immediate causes of heresy and error, this comes not in the last rank of them,—that men are, and will be, wedded to their own opinion,—and will not be moved from the fancy, that they have inclined to and taken up. And those words of the apostle may hint another cause and reason of it, 2 Pet. iii. 5; "For this they are willingly ignorant of." And that willing and wilful ignorance is most commonly the parent of such a paradox and strange brood.

The only inference I shall make from the whole discourse, is, that we labour to know the truth and to keep it. Christians, it is not a small promise that our Saviour maketh, John viii. 32, "Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free." There is a wheel within a wheel: one promise within another. First, 'the truth shall make you free:' secondly, 'Ye shall know the truth;' without which, the other promise would little avail them. The freedom he speaks of, is freedom from sin, as he shows in his discourse following; and the way, the only way, to come to attain this freedom, is by the knowledge of the truth. So great a thing is it to know the truth, to embrace the truth, and to keep in it. And it is not so slight and small a thing, as men commonly make of it, to take up new opinions, either impertinent to the truth, or contrary to it. By our standing to the truth or falling from it, we must stand or fall. And as we have stood to it, or fallen from it, we must be judged at the last day.

'But in the different and various opinions, that are abroad in the world, how shall I do to pitch upon the right? I am unlearned, and cannot sift differing opinions with reason and argument, as learned men can; and, therefore, how should I do to choose the right and keep in it?'—An objection, that a stander-by at Jerusalem, that was neither Pharisee nor Sad-



ducee, might have made about the points in controversy between these two sects. "The Pharisee says, There is a resurrection of the dead, there are angels and spirits: and the Sadducee denies both. How should I, that am unlearned, know whether side to take, and whether opinion to cleave to?"

The first answer I should make, not to wade into any scholastic dispute upon this matter, should be, "Pray earnestly to God for his direction; to the God of truth, that he would direct you into the way of truth." At the tabernacle and temple, when the lamps were dressed and mended; incense also was offered at the same time. Prayer to go along with the dressing of the candle of our minds. It was David's constant prayer for himself, that God would enlighten his understanding: and it was the apostle's prayer for Timothy, "The Lord give thee understanding in all things." It was the profession once of a very good man, and a very learned, "I ever obtained more knowledge of divine things by prayer, than by all my study." He took the right way to attain knowledge, following the rule prescribed by the holy apostle, "If any man want wisdom, let him ask it of God," James i. 5.—And he had Solomon's copy before him, "Lord, give me wisdom." And it is not the least cause of the ignorance, that is in the world, that men do no more pray for understanding. How needful is such prayer every Lord's day morning, but how few do conscientiously make it!

We think we are wise enough, and know enough, and that a little ado will help us to stock enough of understanding. So did the great wise ones among the Jews. They were called the 'wise men,' and they thought they were wise men; and "This people, that knoweth not the law, are cursed:" but they knew it. And, the people are blind; but "Are we blind also?" And yet those wise men, 'knew not the things of their peace, nor the day of their visitation.'

Secondly, A means and an only means to know truth, to avoid error, and to judge clearly of the things we ought to know, is, to get and keep our minds clear from lusts. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."—And, 2 Pet. iii. 1, "Stir up your *pure* minds." Such minds are likely to receive the truth in love. As "the pure in heart shall see God,"—so they shall see the things of God. Lusts, like coloured glass, make men misjudge. Heresy seldom proceeds from bare ignorance, but from one lust or other.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

JOHN, XI. 51.

*This spake he not of himself; but, being high-priest that year, he prophesied, that Jesus should die for that people.*

AND is Caiaphas among the prophets? And is his counsel among the prophecies? He the wickedest man then upon earth, excepting Judas Iscariot: and his, the wickedest counsel that ever was given, since the serpent counselled Eve to destroy mankind. Had not the spirit of prophecy, by the pen of this our evangelist, made this interpretation of it, who could ever have thought it of such a construction?

If it may be wished, I would the same spirit had glossed upon the words of the whole Sanhedrim in ver. 47, 48, "What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." If they grant he did so many miracles, why were they afraid, that men should believe on him? Why did they not believe on him themselves? And why afraid the Romans should destroy their city and nation, if he were believed in? Whereas their destruction was, because they did not believe in him. Truly, Caiaphas said but truly of them, though he aimed it at another sense, "Ye know nothing, neither do ye consider."—No, nor thou, O Caiaphas, neither.—For had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of life: had they considered, they had not brought that guilt upon themselves and the city, that they did.

But in what sense he makes them so senseless, is somewhat obscure: "Ye know not, neither consider, that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." That they knew as well as himself, that any statesman, any reasonable man, might know well enough, that it was better to put to death a ringleader of mischief, as they took Christ to be, than that a whole nation perish. That old maxim in politics and

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1288.



reason, "*Pereat unus, potius quam unitas,*" would easily be observed by less statesmen than they. And the one that they would have to die, they all agreed in; but herein Caiaphas's resolution seems to have outvied theirs;—namely, that whereas they were afraid to take Christ off for fear of the multitude, he blusters through that doubt and scruple, and would have it resolved, that he must die, and be taken away.

So that in those words of his, you may observe him speaking as a Caiaphas, and as a prophet. As a wretched Caiaphas, counselling the Sanhedrim not to fear or boggle at the business, but resolve on it, for 'it is expedient he should die:—and as a prophet, or one inspired, signifying, that it was necessary Christ should die for the preservation of that nation, that it should not perish;—namely, those that believed in him; and so for the preserving of all in other nations, that should also believe. The former he spake and meant with all his heart, to stir up the bench to destroy Christ, for all the danger of the multitude: but this latter he spake indeed, but meant it not, neither understood what he spake: and therefore the text tells us, "This he spake not of himself; but, being high-priest," &c.

There had not been a high-priest, a prophet, among the nation for above four hundred years before: and must Caiaphas now become a prophet? Nay, the Jews tell us, and they tell us truly, that "there had not been any prophet at all in the nation of so long a time: and it is wonder God should now inspire such a wretch as Caiaphas. They tell us, that "upon the death of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, those last prophets, the spirit of prophecy left Israel, departed, and was no more." In which they spoke just as Caiaphas does here, very 'truly' and very 'maliciously:' very 'maliciously,' because they would exclude the apostles and disciples of Christ, from having the prophetic spirit: but withal very 'truly,' as to the space between the death of those last prophets, and the appearing of Christ and his apostles. There was not a man endued with the spirit of prophecy in all that space of time: nay, not a man that did pretend to the spirit of prophecy in all that time.

It is observable, that, about the coming of Christ, many arose, pretending themselves to be Christ, or to be prophets: but we find not, that any, from the death of Malachi, had done



so before. And the reason was, because the prophet Daniel had so exactly pointed out the time of Christ's coming, that the nation knew the time, and expected it: and when it came, such deluders then start up with such pretences, because they knew there would be then a brave change of times. But till that came, they lay still, convinced that the spirit was departed, and should not be restored, till Messias' coming.

What I speak, there is clear proof for in the New Testament. That they knew when Messias should appear, is plain by these words, Luke xix. 11; "He added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear:" and by that concourse of all the nation, out of all nations, to Jerusalem, Acts ii. 5; being instructed by Daniel in his ninth chapter, of the complete time of Messias, "sealing vision and prophecy, and bringing-in everlasting righteousness:" which he had pointed out to the very hour.

And, that they were convinced of the departure of the Holy Ghost, not to be restored till the coming of Messias, appears plainly by the answer of those Jews at Ephesus, Acts xix. 2: "Paul said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Ghost." Not that they doubted at all of the being of the Holy Ghost: but that they had learned, with the whole nation, that the Holy Ghost was departed upon the death of those prophets; and they had never yet heard, that he was restored.

The Jews say again, that "from that time, there was no Urim and Thummim with the high-priest under the second temple." And there is confirmation for it, in Nehem. vii. 65: "And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim." And the reason of its ceasing was, because prophecy was ceased. For the oracle by Urim, as I once showed you, was given by the priest's being inspired and prophesying.

Now, after all the long ceasing of prophesying in the nation, and of prophesying among the priesthood, for a Caiaphas to stand up a prophet, seems something strange; and what shall we say to it? The Rhemists will resolve you the scruple with a wet finger, if you will but believe them.



Will you give me leave to give you their gloss upon the place? “Marvel not (say they) that Christ preserveth his truth in the church, as well by the unworthy as the worthy prelates thereof: the gift of the Holy Ghost following their order and office, as we see here in Caiaphas, and not their merits and person.” And they conclude, “How may we, then, be assured, that Christ will not leave Peter’s seat, though the persons that occupy the same, were as ill, as the blasphemous and malicious mouths of heretics do affirm.” The assertion false, and the inference ridiculous: the assertion, that Caiaphas prophesied by virtue of the order of his priesthood, being most false; for none of that order had prophesied, of four hundred years before: and the inference ridiculous.—And it shows they are hard set, when they must make Caiaphas a copy, after whom to write the infallibility of their Papal chair. But they gazed so much upon the chair, when they wrote this note, that they clean looked off the book and text, they had before them. For had they looked well upon that, that would have given them a more proper reason of his prophesying, and, indeed, the proper reason of it; namely, not so much, because he was high-priest, as because he was high-priest *that year*.—“This he spake not of himself; but, being high-priest *that year*.”

“High-priest *that year*!” Why, he had been high-priest several years before. So Luke tells us, chap. iii, that he was high-priest, when Christ was baptized, three years and a half ago: and Josephus tells us as much and more, and of his being high-priest after this year also. And, therefore, why that circumstance added, “He was high-priest *that year*?” To speak the proper reason of his prophesying,

First, I might say, That was the year, nay, even the hour, of the last gasp of the high-priesthood. It prophesied, and instantly breathed out its last.

There is much dispute upon those words of Paul, Acts xxiii. 5, which our English renders, “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest.” If I should render it, “I *knew* not that *there is a* high-priest;” I am sure it hath warrant enough of the original Greek, and warrant enough of the truth of the thing itself. Did not the high-priesthood die, and cease, and was no more, when the great High-priest of souls died, and by death made expiation for his people? If you will allow the other priesthood, and the employment of



it to live still after the death of Christ, and his sacrifice offered by the Eternal Spirit, till the fall of Jerusalem, and dissolution of the temple; yet, can you find nothing that the high-priest had then to do, that it should survive any longer, after Christ was sacrificed.

The other priesthood had something to do, besides what was most plainly typical in it, and referred to the death of Christ; as sacrificing and sprinkling of blood did. For they had to offer the first-fruits of the people for their thankfulness, to purify women after child-birth, to present the first-born to the Lord, &c. But the distinctive work of the high-priest, in diversity from the other priesthood, was, on the day of expiation, to go within the veil, into the most holy place, with blood, and make an atonement. Which when Christ had done “through the veil of his flesh,” through his own blood, as the apostle tells us, Heb. x. 20,—what had the high-priesthood to do any more?

To this peculiarly related that, which occurred at the death of the great High-priest, Matt. xxvii. 15: “The veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.” Which when you come narrowly to examine, you will find to be the veil, that hung between the holy and most holy place: which the Jews, in their writings, call by a Greek word, *τάραξίς*. This was the veil, that the high-priest turned aside, as we do hangings at a door, to go into the room. And he went into the most holy place only once a year. But now it is rent in pieces: no such distinction or separation thenceforward to be had; and no such work of the high-priest to be done any more.

So that if we take these words of Paul to the sense I mentioned,—viz. “I knew not, brethren, that there is now any high-priest, or any high-priesthood at all; that function is long ago laid in the dust;”—it was spoken like a Paul, boldly, and as one that very well understood, and could well distinguish betwixt, substance and shadow; and how long those ordinances of that economy were to last, and when to decay.

And if, accordingly, we take that circumstance in the text, “He prophesied, as being high-priest, *that year*,” in the sense I mentioned,—namely, ‘that last year of the being and life of the high-priesthood,’ it gives a story not much unlike that of the son of king Cræsus;—who, when he had been dumb



from the birth, and never spake word,—at last, seeing, in a battle, an enemy ready to run his father through, he forced his tongue so, as that he broke the string of silence, and cried out, “O man, do not kill Cræsus.” So the high-priesthood, having been dumb from prophesying for above four hundred years together, and never spoken one prophetic word; when now the King is ready to be slain, its tongue is loosed in Caiaphas, and prophesieth of the redemption of all the Israel of God, and presently expireth. But,

Secondly, “That year” was the great year of ‘pouring down the spirit’ of prophecy and revelation, as in Acts ii;—the great year of ‘sealing vision and prophecy,’ as in Dan. ix. And then it is the less wonder, if this dog get some crumbs, that fell from that plentiful table of the children; and some droppings from that abundant dew, that fell upon the fleece of Gideon. Something like the case of Eldad and Medad (but they were better men), Num. xi. 26; that, in that great pouring out of the Spirit there, had their share, though they were not in the company of those, that were assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And thus was the case with Caiaphas, as it was with Balaam, that wretch,—inspired till then by the devil, but then by God:—who went purposely to curse Israel; but God so overpowered and turned the stream, that he could not but bless them. So this wretch, inspired with malice from the devil, to plot and compass the death of Christ, is now, also, inspired by the spirit of prophecy, to foretell his death, and to proclaim it redemption to his people. A very strange passage, that, while he was sinning against the Holy Ghost, he prophesied by the Holy Ghost; and that, in those very words that he spake against Christ to destroy him, he should prophesy of Christ’s death and redemption, to magnify it.

‘So can the Spirit of God overpower the hearts, and tongues, and actions of men, to serve the design of his own glory.’

And this is that, that I shall speak to.

I might observe, ‘obiter,’ how great diversity there is betwixt the spirit of prophecy and revelation, and the Spirit of grace and holiness. The same Spirit, indeed, is the author of both; but there is so much diversity in the thing wrought, that a Balaam, a Caiaphas, have the spirit of prophecy, who are as far from having the Spirit of sanctification, as the east



is from the west, hell from heaven. A mistake hath taken the spirits of too many, to account this good language and divinity,—“I am a believer, converted, sanctified; therefore, I have the spirit of revelation; and I can preach and expound Scripture by that spirit:” little considering the vast diversity of the gift of prophecy, and of grace, in its nature and end.

But that, that I shall insist upon, shall be, to consider something concerning the Spirit’s overpowering of men, their actions, tongues, hearts, or all. And though here was no overpowering the heart of this wretch, but of his tongue only; yet I shall speak more especially of overpowering of the heart, as most material in this subject: and, which understood, the Spirit’s overpowering of the tongue and action, will be understood with little ado. I shall couch what I have to speak, under these following observations:—

I. I may take up that, Gen. vi. 3; “And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” He saith not, with this, or that, or the other, man in particular; but ‘with man,’ in general,—because the Spirit of God strives with every man in the world at some time, and in some degree or other.—Acts vii. 51: “Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” The Spirit strove with those wretches, though this striving was to no purpose or effect, because of their resistance. And so in that exhortation, 1 Thess. v. 19, ‘Quench not the Spirit,’ is intimated, that they, that quench the Spirit, and let not his sparks grow to any thing, yet have these sparks striving together, if they would let them alone.

Christian, I shall not be solicitous to prove this, because it needs not. And I must tell thee, it is not so well and right with thee, as it should, if thou findest not the proof and experience of this truth in thine own heart: if thou find not some knockings at that door, that calls and tells, “It is time to awake out of sleep,” and set to work some checkings of conscience, when thou goest about knowingly to sin; and some reprovings of conscience, when thou hast so sinned: some stirrings of heart upon hearing the threatenings and curses of the law of God in a powerful ministry: some trouble of soul upon sight of God’s judgments upon thyself or others: in a word, if thou find not thy conscience, as a voice behind thee, calling after thee, “This is the way;—walk in it.” If thou find any such things, listen and improve them. “It is the voice of my Beloved, putting, as it were, his finger in at



the hole of the door," to see whether thou wilt open. It is the Spirit of God striving with thy heart. But if thou find not any such thing, take heed lest thou hast wearied the Spirit of God, that he will strive no more.

II. The Spirit is able to overpower any heart, that he strives withal. I need not to prove this neither, to any that understand, what the Spirit of God is: which I hope you all understand. A Macedonian, or Socinian, that denies the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, yet I see not how he can deny this, if he do but confess the Holy Ghost to be the Spirit of God. Let me even challenge of you, that have been better taught, to attest this truth with me, and to look up towards heaven with due consideration of the Sacred Spirit, and to acknowledge, in the words of Job<sup>b</sup>, "I know thou canst do all things, and that no thought can be holden from thee." God, in Jer. xxxii. 27, proclaims, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" If we should take the words as spoken particularly of the Holy Spirit, are they not most true to every tittle? Is not the Holy Ghost 'Jehovah?' Is he not the 'Lord?' Is he not the 'God of all flesh,' and all men's spirits? And then can any thing, can any heart, be too hard for him?

But, if any desire a particular proof of the thing we assert,—viz. 'that the Holy Spirit is able to overpower any heart whatsoever, that he strives withal;'—let him either look at a profane wretch, that always resisted the strivings of the Spirit, now come under horror of conscience; or let him well ponder upon the state of the damned in hell, who were such resisters, while they were here. And, first, let him read that, Isa. xxx. 33: "The breath," or Spirit, "of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." In that horrid torture of conscience of theirs, where the worm ever gnaweth, and never dieth, do you not think their hearts are overpowered? Are not now those brazen gates, and iron doors, that would bar-out the overcomings of the Spirit, broke open, and broke all to pieces? "Vicisti, Galilæe," as Julian once,—so, do not they everlastingly confess, that God is proved too hard for them? And how is this altoshattering of their hearts and consciences come upon them? 'The breath,' or Spirit, 'of the Lord, like a river of brimstone,' is gushed in upon them, and overflows them with horror; and they cannot resist. It is the everlasting vengeance of the Spirit of God upon them,



thus to crush their consciences with everlasting confusion and torture; because they did, they would, resist his strivings, while they were here. No, no; resist, damned souls; now resist, and keep the doors fast barred, that the power, the vengeance, of the Spirit cannot break in.—No, it will not be: the Spirit is all-powerful: if he will, he is able to overpower any heart he strives with here: he will with vengeance do it to him, that resists hereafter.

III. The first aim of the Spirit, in his striving, is to try men. It is apparent by Scripture, that God, by the motions of his Spirit, comes to try those men, who, he knows, will not receive the motions of his Spirit. As, in 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, “In the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.” God withdrew or suspended the acting of the Spirit of grace, ‘to try him.’ So God doth, on the other hand, employ some actings of the Spirit, to try whether men will entertain them.

God tries men by his word, whether they will obey him or no. “God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not;” saith Moses to the people of Israel concerning God’s giving them his law<sup>c</sup>. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem; thou that killest the prophets, &c; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not<sup>d</sup>!” I tried whether thou wouldest be gathered, but thou wouldest not.—He tries men likewise by his providences, how they will demean themselves under them: “Thou shalt remember all the way, which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no<sup>e</sup>.” So he doth by his Spirit; in that noted place, Rev. iii. 18, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” He that stands at the door, could break down the door: but he tries, whether the door will be opened, to give him entertainment.

And in this regard, it is no wonder, if men be said to ‘resist’ and ‘quench’ the Spirit; because he comes only to try, whether they will embrace or resist, quench or cherish. This work of his differs from the effectual working of grace, when he comes resolvedly to ‘overcome’ and ‘overpower.’

<sup>c</sup> Exod. xx. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. xxiii. 37.

<sup>e</sup> Deut. viii. 2.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

ROMANS, IX. 3.

*For I could wish, that I myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

A DREADFUL passage at the first reading! and which may make us even to tremble:—a man to wish himself to be accursed from Christ! Accursed from Christ! The very words may make us to quake, to think of such a thing. And can we believe, that a Paul should make such a wish, that he might be ‘accursed of Christ,’ who knew so well what it was to be ‘blessed’ of him? Can he make such a wish? Or rather, can any one but such a one as he, make such a wish, upon such a ground, upon such a condition, upon such a warrant?

The apostle is here beginning his discourse concerning the casting-off of the Jewish nation, and seed of Israel; as, at the nineteenth verse of the chapter foregoing, he is beginning his discourse about the calling of the Gentiles. There, there he styles by the title of the “whole creation,” *πᾶσα κτίσις*, an expression usual among the Jews, to signify in that construction: these, here he calls his ‘brethren and kinsmen;’ for so nature had made them,—he and they coming of the same stock and original. He speaks there of some mourning out of desire, that the calling of the Gentiles should be accomplished: here, he speaks of himself mourning out of grief, for the casting-off of his own nation.—There, the ‘whole creation’ of the Gentiles themselves ‘groaning to be delivered from the bondage of their sinful corruption:’—here, himself grieving for the not delivering of his own people from theirs, at ver. 2; he hath grief, and ‘great grief;’ and sorrow, and ‘continual sorrow,’ for them; ‘and could wish himself to be accursed from Christ,’ on condition it might be better with them.

And one would think, he had very small cause to be thus

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1293.



affected towards them, if it be well considered, how they had continually demeaned themselves towards him. They had continually bred him trouble, always persecuted him, five times beaten him, constantly sought his life, and contrived his death. And yet the good man grieves for them, that grieved not for themselves, and that always were grieving him; and could wish himself to be accursed for them, that could wish him cursed to the pit of hell.

A strange wish, and a strange charity! that he himself might be accursed, that they might not be so; that he might be separated from Christ, that so they might be united to him. A passage so strange, that it hath but one parallel,—viz. that of Moses, *Exod. xxxii. 32*, where he prays “God to blot him out of his book,” when God was now ready to cut off the seed of Israel. A passage so strange, that it seems directly to cross the whole course of his profession and practice. He professeth [*Phil. iii. 8*], that “all things in the world were but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus:” and yet, here he can, upon some condition, be content to lose him. He practiseth (*1 Cor. ix. 27*), to “bring his body into subjection; lest, when he had preached to others, he himself might be a cast-away:”—and yet he could wish, upon some condition, to prove a cast-away. So strange a passage, that some expositors cannot endure to look upon it in its full proportion, but take, as it were, a diminishing glass to look upon it withal; and they make those words of the apostle, to speak less a great deal, than ever they meant. They will have his meaning to be but this: “For my brethren’s sake, the seed of Israel, I could be content, to be separate from Christ for a while, and to continue upon earth from that glory, that is prepared for me in heaven, that I might labour for their salvation.” Do you think, that being ‘anathema,’ or ‘accursed from Christ,’ means no more than this?

Others conceive, that the apostle only useth a high expression, whereby to signify, how entirely he desireth the good of his own nation. As if he had needed so full and feeling an asseveration, as, “I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,” *ver. 1*, to intimate, that he so entirely desired their salvation.

But, to omit more,—by this strong asseveration, it is



plain, that he thinks as he speaks, and speaks as he thinks. For it was so strange a wish, that he himself sees reason to use many asseverations to show, that he speaks in good earnest; otherwise, he would hardly be believed. As,

First, His double asseveration, affirmatively and negatively, ver. 1; "I speak the truth,—I lie not."

Secondly, He lays his conscience for earnest, that he did not lie, but spoke truth; "My conscience bearing me witness."

Thirdly, He doth, as it were, call Christ and the Holy Ghost to witness; "I speak the truth in Christ: my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." And so, under the attestation of three witnesses, his conscience, Christ, and the Holy Ghost,—he would have what he says to be confirmed for a truth, and that he may be believed.

Well, we believe that he speaks from his very heart, and as he thinks, that "he wishes himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh." Doth he piously, in so wishing, or prudently? St. Austin once wished, that he might have heard him preach; but what would he have thought, think you, at such a wish as this? Doth he not curse himself, when he wisheth to be accursed? And doth he not undervalue Christ, when he could wish to be separate from Christ?

That passage, "My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," doth plainly evidence, that what he doth, is neither rashly done, nor impiously, nor imprudently,—but from a good conscience, good affection, and not without the warrant of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, at ver. 38 of the chapter next going before, "He is persuaded that neither life nor death, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor any creature, is able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." And yet, at this place, he could wish, that he were separate from Christ, on the condition he proposeth. Not that either he undervalueth his uniting to Christ, or that he thought he should be separated from him, or that he simply desired it: but, comparatively, he could wish it,—on condition the seed of Israel, his brethren and kinsmen, might be united to him. He could wish to be damned, on condition they might be saved. Which may seem a dreadful wish; but so much doth he value the salva-



tion of so many thousand souls, above the saving of his own one soul; and so much desire the glorifying of Christ, and his grace in the salvation of them.

Thus doth he 'love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul,' when he prefers the glorifying of his grace before his own benefit. And thus 'he loves his neighbour as himself,' nay, more than himself, when he prefers the good of their souls before his own. It had been much, if he had been willing to be imprisoned, to be scourged, to be killed, for their sakes: but what love could be more, than to be willing to be 'accursed of Christ' for them?

Ah, Paul, if thou be accursed from Christ, thou art undone for ever. If thou be separated from Christ, it had been better for thee, thou hadst never been born.—“However, 'the love of Christ constrains me;' whose blood and grace, I would have glorified in these men's salvation: and the love of souls constrains me too; for I would not, if I might redeem them upon any terms, have so many to perish.”

For the viewing of the words, and the whole matter before us, let us leisurely and more particularly consider of these things following:—

I. The apostle knew, that the far greatest part of the seed of Israel, 'his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh,' was to be cast-off by God, and 'accursed by Christ,' for their disobedience and unbelief. And this he knew well enough, from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, whatsoever he knew besides by revelation.

First, That so infinite a number of them should perish, and so small be saved, the Scripture is so abundant in showing, that it is needless to cite places that speak it. The apostle himself cites two in chap. ix. 27; that of Isaiah, “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant,” i. e. but a remnant, “should be saved.” And how little that remnant should be, he cites another place of the same prophet, ver. 29; “Except the Lord had left us a very small remnant, we had been made as Sodom, and we had been like to Gomorrah.” Which you have, Isa. i. 9; a small remnant, like Lot and his family, to escape;—the rest, like Sodom and Gomorrah, to be destroyed.

To the same tenor is that, Isa. xvii. 6: “Gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive-tree, two or



three berries in the top of the uttermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof." But gleanings, but two or three berries, but four or five olives of the bearing of a whole tree.—And that, Jer. iii. 14; "I will take you one of a city, and two of a tribe, and will bring you to Zion."—'One of a city' is but a small number to a whole city; 'two of a family or a tribe,' but a pitiful quantity to a whole tribe:—and yet only so small a remnant, that must be brought to Zion. How great then is the quantity of them, that perish!

Nay, if we should take that literally which you have, Rev. vii, 'Twelve thousand sealed' of every tribe; a 'hundred and forty-four thousand' in all;—yet, how small a number is this, in comparison of the thousands of thousands of the seed of Israel, that was scattered through the whole world. As that account, in the days of Elias, of seven thousand, that bowed not the knee to Baal, was small to the many hundred thousands that were in all Israel;—so likewise, saith our apostle, 'There is a remnant,' and but a remnant, 'at this present,' chap. xi. 5.

And if we compare, how many thousands of Israel there were, that never would receive the gospel, and how many thousands, that, having received it, revolted from it,—we shall find an infinite number perishing in unbelief and apostasy, in comparison of those, that believed and were saved. To omit how many millions of them have perished in unbelief and obduration, and so have perished all along these sixteen hundred years.

This goes to the very soul of our holy apostle, to see so vast a destruction of his people and nation. Let us take some glimpse of his prospect from the story of a slaughter in the East Indies: A tyrant caused all the inhabitants of a great city, and country about it, to the number of six hundred thousand, to be fettered in chains, and manacles, and to be laid so bound in a great plain: and thither he comes himself; and, at his command, his soldiers slay that vast number of people at one clap. What a sight had been here for a tender heart,—six hundred thousand throats of men, women, and children, cut at one instant. Our tender-hearted apostle is looking upon a prospect of slaughter incomparably beyond that for sadness, though that were sad enough, and enough again. If you regard slaughter of bodies, those of his nation outvied the number of these that were slain. Here were six



hundred thousand; but, at the taking of Jerusalem, eleven hundred thousand perished by sword, pestilence, and famine; besides almost a hundred thousand taken captives.

But, secondly, It is not the perishing of bodies that he mourneth over, but the perishing of souls. A whole nation scattered over the whole earth, and so perishing by thousands of thousands, soul and body, to all eternity. It grieves him to the soul, to look upon such a numberless slaughter of souls, perishing and going to eternal flames: his whole nation to become a Calvary, a place of skulls, of ruined souls, perishing in blindness and unbelief. According to that, Isa. lxvi. 24; He 'goes forth' in his meditation, 'and looks upon the carcasses of those, that had so rebelled against God;' and thinks of their 'worms never dying,' and their 'fires never quenched:'—and the thought of this pierceth his soul through and through, as with a sword; that he thinks Jeremiah's wish too low and little for him, "Oh, that my head were a fountain, and my eyes cisterns;" but he takes a deeper sigh, and a deeper wish, "I could wish to be accursed from Christ," &c.

II. Is it only the vastness of the numbers that were to perish, that he looks upon with so much regret and yearning of bowels? That is not all; but he cannot but observe, also, the sad manner of their perishing,—viz. under a peculiar quarrel of Christ against them, and a special curse and vengeance upon them.

This very apostle denounceth the doom and equity of it in that passage, 1 Cor. xvi. 22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran Atha;" or, "accursed at the Lord's coming."—Which direful thunderbolt, that it is directly and more especially levelled and aimed at that nation, may be collected, partly, because he useth their own language to speak it in, 'Maran Atha;' and chiefly, because no people under heaven did less 'love the Lord Jesus,' or so much hate him.

The word 'anathema,' that he useth there, he useth here: there denouncing a curse upon that people; and here wishing a curse upon himself, on condition they might escape it. He seeth it threatened in so dismal terms upon them in many places of Scripture: and now he seeth it coming in so dismal a manner upon them, that what would he not give, what would he not be, that they might escape it!



Such thunderclaps as these that follow, sound dreadfully against them, and light heavily upon them; which makes the tender-hearted apostle to tremble for their sakes. Deut. xxxii. 22, 23: "A fire is kindled in my anger, and it shall burn unto the lowest hell, &c. I will heap mischiefs upon them, I will spend mine arrows upon them." And so he goes on in fire and thunder, Isa. i. 9; "Set a very little remnant aside, and they shall be as Sodom, and shall perish as Gomorrah;" monuments of divine vengeance to all generations;—Isa. lxxv. 15; "Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen." And the very last verse of that prophet leaves them in 'fire,' with the 'never-dying worm' for their rebellion. And the last words of the Old Testament threaten a 'curse' upon the land, if they disobey;—which they did to the highest degree, and so fell under the lowest curse.

This apostle very well knew, that that saying of the prophets, Isa. xi. 4, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked one,"—did aim more especially and directly at that wicked nation. And so he himself applies it, in 2 Thess. ii. 8: "And then shall that wicked one be revealed," &c. He very well knew, that those words of our Saviour, "As for these mine enemies, that would not have me to rule over them, bring hither and slay them before me,"—did most peculiarly reflect upon that people, whom Christ destroyed as direfully, as they rejected him scornfully. And, in a word, our apostle knew, that Christ's fearful destroying of that nation is expressed and characterized in Scripture, as his great victory, and triumph, and glory; as, indeed, it were endless to cite places to show. So fatally did they fall under Christ's peculiar quarrel against them, and curse and vengeance upon them. That, whereas, Rev. vi. 2, he is described as mounted, and 'riding forth, conquering and to conquer;' if you look well upon what follows all along that chapter, you will find his conquest to be the destroying that nation.

This is a second thing, that pierceth the heart of this our most charitable apostle through and through,—to think that it should be so with that nation.

III. Nor are these things alone in the apostle's thoughts, but he remembers they had been God's old and covenanted people; a people, upon whom 'his name had been called;' a people, for whom he had done so great things as he had



done; and these now to be destroyed and perish. Read the very next words after the text; "Who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers, and of whom Christ came, as concerning the flesh." And now all to be so horridly changed, so as to them should now pertain the curse, the wrath, the vengeance; and that Christ should come to rejoice and triumph in their destruction! This makes the tide of his affection to flow so high, nay, to flow even above all measure, as it does here in the text.

And what wilt thou do for thy great name? How would the heathen say,—Where is now their God? How would the nations that were about them (not considering how they had deserved destruction at the hands of God), be ready to fly in the face of God, with scorn and blasphemy, as if he were not so faithful to them, as he should have been; and, that he could not do for them, as he should have done! So Moses, of old, pleads with God, when he was ready to destroy them in the wilderness, with such an argument; "The Egyptians will say, That God could not perform his word, and bring them into the land, that he had promised them."

So that our apostle's charity looks towards them, and would not have them perish; and his zeal looks towards God, and would not have him dishonoured. And from both these together, his wish and words, "For I could wish, that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren."

Upon the words, we have occasion to observe these three things:—

I. The terms of his wish, or what it is he could wish, to be 'accursed from Christ.'

II. The terms or condition whereupon he could wish it; 'For his brethren and kinsmen's' sake, of the Jewish nation, that they might not perish. And,

III. The cause or original of his being thus content so to wish; his great 'zeal' for God, and his great 'love' to their souls.

To explain a little the first,—viz. the thing that he could wish: in the original it is, *Ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, "To be anathema from Christ;" which the text of your Bibles renders, "to be accursed from Christ;" the margin, "to be separated." And the word, indeed, means both; or,



indeed, but one and the same thing in both. The Greek word is used in Lev. xxvii, for a thing 'separate,' or 'set apart,' as a thing 'accursed' to him, that shall meddle with it. And so the spoil of Jericho is said to be an 'accursed thing.' It was, indeed, a consecrate thing, sacred and dedicated to the treasury of the Lord; but an accursed thing to him that should meddle with it, to take it for his own; as it proved to Achan with his wedge.

But the word is used not only of things, but of persons, men or women; to wit, such as were undoubtedly doomed to destruction. And so it is taken, also, in Lev. xxvii; and so in 1 Cor. xvi. 22: "He that loveth not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema," that is, 'accursed.' And to the like sense the apostle here, "I could wish myself to be an accursed thing from Christ;" that he should have nothing to do with me, that I should be an 'execrable thing' unto him.

The apostle, to express how earnestly he desires the salvation of his nation, names the worst thing, that can be named or thought; and professeth, that he could willingly undergo that, that they might obtain salvation. And his expression intimates two degrees of misery, one above another. First, that he may be separate and set apart from Christ, so as that Christ should have nothing to do with him. Secondly, that he should become a curse or execration to Christ, or as an accursed thing to him. Direful and dreadful things to be supposed or spoken of: than which no sadder, or more doleful, can be imagined or conceived.

Only this we may observe, That the apostle doth not downright wish himself 'accursed;' but intimates, that, if his being so would redeem his nation from the curse, he could be content to be so.

His expression may give us occasion to meditate, What a sad thing it is to be separate from Christ, as a thing accursed: and to consider with ourselves, how the case may be with us, as to this particular.

Now, he that knows what Christ is, needs no more proof to show, what it is to be separate from him. If in him alone be 'life' (John i. 4), to be separate from him can be nothing else but 'death.' And if there be "no condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1), there can be nothing but condemnation to him, that is not in him. It is the saying of our apostle (2 Cor. xii. 2), "I knew a man in



Christ, taken up into the third heaven." What, by the rule of contraries, can become of him, that is *out* of Christ? I would we could but seriously lay these three things to heart, which are the particulars of the matter before us:—

First, How sad a thing it is for Christ, to have nothing to do with a man, but to disclaim him.

Secondly, How sadder, if sadder needs be, is it for Christ to be ashamed of a man, and disdain to own him. And,

Thirdly, Yet sadder, if possible, for Christ to curse a man, or, at least, to look upon him as a thing accursed. Are not all these included in the apostle's expression here? And is not any of these the saddest thing, that can possibly befall a man? It may be, you will say, 'Hell-fire is worse than these; the worm that never dies, eternal wrath and vengeance, are worse than these.'—But doth not this separation from Christ include all these? And can any other come of it but fire, and wrath, and vengeance?

II. How, then, is the case with thee, as to this particular? 'Oh! I doubt not but I am God's: I hope, Christ owns propriety and interest in me.'—But upon what ground dost thou think, that God owns thee? What reason hast thou to think, that Christ acknowledges thee for a sheep of his, against the claim of the wolf and the roaring lion?

I have heard of a man, that laid claim unto a very great estate, upon no other ground in the world, but because he dreamed one night, that that estate was his. Men's confidence about their spiritual welfare most commonly proceeds from no other ground, but merely because they dream so: like them who, in reference to outward welfare (1 Thess. v), dreamt of "peace, peace," when "sudden destruction" was just entering-in at the door. It makes me remember that saying of Jude, ver. 8; "These filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." And why does he call them 'dreamers' rather than any other title? Because all their confidence in what they did, came but from a fancy and dream, and had no better foundation: and though they did this evil, yet they dream they shall speed well enough.

God lays claim to no man, but because he seeth that in him, that pleaseth him. He calls none his, that is offensive to him. The wit of man cannot invent a reason, why God should own a man, that goes on in his wickedness; and lay



claim to him for his own, that is continually offending him. Plead election; plead the infiniteness of God's mercy; plead the freeness of his grace; plead what you can;—you can never give real satisfaction to your own heart, that God claims any interest in you, or owns you for his own, till you walk so as to please him. For what does an ungodly and wicked man differ from a 'separate' thing from Christ, and one that he hath no claim to, and nothing to do withal? The Scripture tells us, that "God hates the proud, abhors the covetous, scorns the scorers, frowns upon the ungodly, and despiseth evil-doers."

And this fruitful meditation I have gathered from the mention, that is here made of being 'accursed' or 'separated' from Christ. Now, from the consideration of the person, that could be willing to undergo this separation, and of the reason why,—viz. the saving of the souls of the Jews his brethren,—I may gather as fruitful a doctrine: and that is this:

'That the souls of other men should be dear to us, as well as our own: and that it is cause of grief to see any soul perish.'

That the souls of these men were dearer to the apostle than his own, in that he could be content that *his* should perish, so that *theirs* might not, is a thing of rare example: and whether we are to write after such a copy, is a question yet to be discussed. But that the souls of others should be dear unto us, is so plain in this copy, that he that runs, may read it.

It is not for kindred's sake barely, that he is so affectionate to them, though he calls them "brethren and kinsmen;" but it is their souls that he looks after, "that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," and not perish. It were needless to show, how earnestly he laboured to save as many souls as possible,—and, if it were possible, that no soul should perish. His pains and preaching, his actions and Epistles, breathe such affection every where, and to all persons.

'But this (you will say) belonged to his function, as he was an apostle and minister:—but doth this belong to every private person, to be so tender to the souls of all?'

I am loath this question should be asked; it is so like Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Have I any



thing to do with another man's soul, that I should trouble myself about it?

But how shall we interpret that great command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?" But, first, "Who is my neighbour?" Our Saviour answers it with a parable. Let me answer it with another question; Nay, who is not thy neighbour?—In that parable of the man that fell among thieves, and the good Samaritan relieving him, our Saviour shows, that even one of another nation, even one of an enemy-nation, is to be accounted a neighbour. For so were the Samaritans to the Jews: and yet the Samaritan that pitied, was 'neighbour,' in our Saviour's construction, to him that fell among thieves. The Greek and Latin word that is used to signify a neighbour, signifies properly one that is 'near' to one; but it means nearness of relation and affection, rather than nearness of place. Nearness of relation, that is, as all are made of one blood: and nearness of affection, that should be, as all are of one shape and image. Every one is our neighbour, of what land or nation, state or condition, soever; because every one is related to us by these respects.

Well; every one is our neighbour, and we are to love our neighbour, that is, every one, "as ourselves:" to hate none, to malice none, to be enemy to none, but to love every one. And what especially to love in him? That that is the chief, and most regardable, and most precious, in him; and that is, his soul. To have an affection, a regard, a kindness, for every man's soul, and to owe and pay a duty that we owe to them: and that upon as urgent obligations as likely can be; and those are, the duty of charity, and the preciousness of every soul: or, to knit them both in one,—charity to every one because of his soul.

If we should question, why we are to "love our neighbour as ourself?" what is the proper answer? Because God hath commanded it. But did God command it without reason? And what is the proper reason of the command? Does not that lie especially in reference to the soul of every man? David hath a saying [Psal. xxxiii. 13], "The Lord looketh down from heaven, and beholdeth all the children of men: he fashioneth their hearts alike." From whence some argue, that the souls of all the inhabitants of the earth are alike. And so, indeed, as to their essential con-



stitution, they are all alike. That very thing may hush all exceptions against the loving of every man; and may quell malice and enmity against any. Consider these things:—

First, That man, that loves not every man for his soul's sake, knows not the value and excellency of a soul: for did he, that very thing would move affection in him towards it. Beauty, of itself, is an attractive of affection,—and it doth, as it were, charm the heart to love it, and delight in it. And if a soul, in its essential constitution, be not beautiful and lovely, what thing upon earth can be counted beautiful and lovely? A soul, that carries the image of God in its very constitution: a soul, that is like to the nature of angels in its essence and being: a soul, that is capable of the divine nature: a soul, that is capable of eternal life and glory:—if this be not lovely, what is lovely?

It is accounted a great piece of policy to study men; to observe and take notice of the tempers, humours, passions, carriages, of men: and some have come to be great statesmen by such observation. I am sure, it is a great piece of wisdom to study souls,—and to observe the nature, worth, price, excellency, both of our own, and other men's. And there is not a more general and comprehensive cause of the ruin of souls, than men's ignorance of, and unacquaintedness with, their own souls. And it is no wonder, if men be not tender of the souls of others, when they are thus regardless of their own. And the cause of that is, because they are so unacquainted with the great value of any soul.

Secondly, I might insist to show, that he, that is not tender of the soul of another, is not tender towards his own: because he neglects so great a duty,—viz. his being regardful of his neighbour's soul; the duty of that great command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour.”

I might show also, that a heart, that is right softened and made tender by grace, and charity, and religion, is soft and tender to every one, towards every thing, wherein religion, and piety, and goodness, may be concerned. A heart of stone is a heart of stone throughout, and no softness in it. It is not softened towards God, to love him; or towards its own soul, to love that; nor to its neighbour, to love him. But a heart of flesh is soft and tender throughout, towards every thing, towards which it ought to be soft and tender. Yea, as Solomon will tell you, “A good man is merciful and



tender towards his very beast; when the very mercies of the wicked are cruel."

But what affection is it, that we owe to every soul in the world? Must we come up to write after this copy of the apostle before us,—to be content, and wish, that our own souls should perish, on condition other men's souls should be saved?

So far, you will say, he was within compass, to tender their souls, to desire that they might not perish, and to mourn for their perdition: this is something within reason. But to wish, that himself might perish, that they might escape it; to be accursed from Christ, that they might not be so;—who required this at his hands? And must our Christian charity come to that pitch, or we come not to the right pitch of charity?

Towards the answering this question, let me first ask another: Would he have wished thus in behalf of any other nation but his own? Would he have been content to have been accursed from Christ for the people of Edom, Syria, Greece, Italy, or any other country?—You will say, It may be, he would not: for they were not so near akin to him as the seed of Israel was.—But 'kindred' was the least thing, that wrought with him here, though that was somewhat: but that his people perished, the old people of God perished, the old church of God perished; there was an end of the covenant of God with them, an end of the promises to their fathers; and they that had been more to God than all the world besides, were now to fall under his wrath and curse more than all the world besides:—this wrought deeply with him.

An occurrence, such as the like was never to occur again; an occurrence so strange and dreadful, that the ruin and destruction of that nation is commonly charactered in Scripture, as the ruin and destruction of the whole world: as if "heaven and earth passed away," when that church and state passed away: and as if "sun and moon and stars fell to the ground," when the state and ordinances of that church fell.

Lay all these things, then, together, as on heaps of misery and sadness, and conceive our apostle looking on them; and we shall see both the reason of his extraordinary sorrow (which we have, in part, seen already), and warrant for his extraordinary wish.

He sees with sad eyes, and tears in them, his whole nation



and blood and kindred, to be rejected, scattered, destroyed, ruined. It fetcheth more tears to think, that all those souls must perish, as well as their outward estate. But it makes the tide flow above measure, to think of a whole church destroyed,—the ordinances of God laid in the dust,—all the providences of God for that people come to such an end,—the children of the kingdom cast into outer darkness,—and the name of God blasphemed by the enemy for their sakes.

These, indeed, you will say, were very just causes of his grief: but were these just warrants for him to make such a wish against himself, that he might be accursed for them?

This strange wish, I say again as I said before, came not from passion or oversight, but from charity and zeal. And it was charity and zeal above the ordinary measure, as the man, whose they were, was a man above the ordinary state of men. As he had more revelation from God of the things of the gospel and heaven, than ever man had, as having been rapt into heaven to contemplate them;—so had he more zeal and charity, we may justly say, than ever man had: zeal for God, and charity for souls. And it were no hard thing to make a fair probability of the truth of it. So that as he was rapt into heaven to attain to his revelations,—so he is rapt, as it were, into an altitude and sublimity of these two things above other men, when he prefers God's glory in saving his nation before his own salvation, and the souls of his nation before his own soul. And this abounding, superabounding zeal and charity, is that that moves him to make such a wish; and his conscience and the Holy Ghost warrant it. "I speak the truth in Christ; I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I could wish myself accursed," &c.

But to return, then, to the former question,—Must an ordinary Christian write after this copy, and come up to such a pitch of charity and zeal?

I might answer, The occasion is extraordinary, the person extraordinary, the measure of charity and zeal extraordinary: and, therefore, it cannot serve for an ordinary rule.

Again, I might briefly answer, as we sometimes answer children:—for pardon me, if I take up that homely and familiar comparison. It is ordinary with children, when they have meat in their hand, to be greedy, and think they have not enough; but they cry for more. But we commonly



still them, with bidding them first eat up that they have, and then they shall have more. God hath put thy task into thy hand, Christian,—viz. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Ply, take out, digest that task; and then it may be seasonable to ask, ‘What must I do more?’ Here the love of the apostle to others is more than to himself: God requires of thee to love thy neighbour as thyself; go and do that, and never trouble thyself to question, what thou hast more to do towards thy neighbour, till thou hast done that.

Keep but pace with the apostle, as he paceth like a Christian: this is the task God requires of us. He requires not, that we keep pace with him, as he paceth like an apostle. We poor children cannot expect to keep even pace with so great a father of the church, as this apostle was. It is our work to follow his steps, though ‘non passibus æquis,’ though ‘not with even pace,’—yet as well as we can.

But to consider of this case more particularly and distinctly. Concerning our duty, or what we are to do, we are to consider, what is possible,—what is lawful,—and what is required. For that may be lawful, which is not possible; and that may be lawful, which is not required. For example, it were very lawful for a man, to be as wise as Solomon, if he could attain to it; but that is impossible. So it is very lawful for a man to speak with the tongue of men and of angels, if he could do it; but it is not possible to be done. So, on the other hand, it is very lawful for a man to spend all his life in study and reading of books; but this is not required of all, because they have other just and lawful callings to follow. So it is very lawful for a man, as Timothy, to drink nothing but water, but it is not required; since God hath afforded other wholesome drinks: and, “every creature of God is good, being received with thanksgiving.”

So, as to our duty, or what we are to do, we are to determine what is lawful by what is required. I speak of our Christian *duty*; for as to our Christian *liberty*, that is not to be determined by what is required, but by what is warranted. Now, as to the thing before us:—

I. It is impossible we should reach to that height of grace, that this great apostle attained to. We cannot look, that our poor spark of grace, if it be any, should shine so bright, as this glorious star of the first magnitude: nor that we poor worms, creeping altogether upon the earth, should soar to



that pitch, that he did, that was rapt into the third heaven. And, therefore, not being in the same capacity with him in grace, we cannot think we are in the capacity of making the same wish with him: which came merely from the abounding grace of zeal and charity, that was in him.

II. Then,—which we must especially look after,—is it required from us, that we should wish such a wish to ourselves, to be ‘accursed from Christ,’ for any man’s salvation? Is it either our Christian duty, and we bound to do it? or is it within our Christian liberty, and we licensed to it?

I check myself for that I go about to discuss such a case as this; when there is a great deal more need to bewail the sad want of common duty, that the apostle passed through, to come to that pitch he did. Which when any man hath passed through, then if he have warrant, as the apostle had,—let him wish as he did. The pitch that he came to, was to love his neighbour above himself, when he could wish so much evil to himself for their good. But the way that he went up thither, was by loving his neighbour as himself.

And this is the way that we are to set into, and to keep in: and to write after him in this, though we cannot, nor are required to do, in the other.

There are, then, three steps or degrees of the apostle’s charity: first, He hated no man in the world; secondly, He loved his neighbour as himself; thirdly, He loved him above himself. Now, it is without all doubt, in the two former of these we are all absolutely bound to follow him.

I. To hate no man in the world, to be enemy to none. That gloss that the Jews made upon the command, Matt. v. 43, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy,”—was a gloss from hell, and not from heaven; from Satan, and not from God. And how our Saviour confutes it, and how he teaches what a Christian is to do in that case, you may see there; “Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you.” As he, of old, said, “He knew not what to-morrow meant, because he looked upon every present day, as his last;”—so a true Christian knows not, what enmity or hatred to any man means, because he looks upon every man as his brother. And it was a most noble commendation, that one gives of another; “Our friend Sturmius hated no man, but only vice, wickedness, heresy, and the devil.”



A true Christian hates no man upon his own quarrel. David professeth to God, "Do not I hate them, that hate thee? Yes, I hate them with a perfect hatred." But it was upon no quarrel of his own; but because they hated God. Nor was it their persons he hated, but their qualities. So this apostle would have those, that "loved not the Lord Jesus, to be accursed," 1 Cor. xvi. 22.—It was not because they loved not him, or he them; but because they loved not Christ.

There is nothing in the world more common than the hate of one against another; whereas there is nothing in the world, of which you can give less a reason. Why a man should love every man in the world, I can give variety of reasons; but why any one should hate any one man in the world, the invention of men and devils cannot give a solid reason. He hath wronged thee: so hast thou done others.—He hath deceived thee: so hast thou, but too oft, done thyself.—He hath been offensive to thee: so hast thou been to God.—Thou canst give no reason, why thou shouldest hate thy brother, but the same will be retorted upon thee, that for the same cause thou shouldest hate thyself.

II. To love our neighbour as ourselves.—This is a "royal law," James ii. 8, or the "law of the king:" and that which the King of his church hath not only given, but a law, which he put himself also in subjection to. Deny else his doing for mankind. Did he not love his neighbour, man, as himself,—when he left the bosom of his Father, to take the nature, the infirmities, the sins, of man upon him? Did he not love his neighbour, man, as himself,—when he laid down his life for him; and that with as exquisite cruelty, anguish, and torture, executed against him, as men and devils could invent? And if you doubt of his love to man, his neighbour; look into the wound in his side, and put your finger into the print of the nails, in his hands and feet; and ask, how those came there.

And when this pattern and copy of love sends his choice apostle into the world, to testify his love to the world, he warrants and he enables him to express as much love to men, as it was possible for man to express. Look else upon his indefatigable pains for the good of men, his sufferings, his troubles, his bonds and imprisonment, and, in a word, the constant course of his life and ministry: and all for the



benefit of men in the service of his Master. And then believe the better, what he speaks here, that "he could wish himself accursed," that they might be saved.

This is the copy of a Christian, and not of an apostle only. And this must every one of us write after, in the best degree we can.

Now, if any inquire, what is the proper reason and ground of the love of our neighbour, I might treat at large of these things:—That a Christian is to love every one,

I. For his own sake.

II. For God's sake.

III. For his soul's sake.

I. For his own sake. If any ask, Why? the answer is ready, Because he is thine own flesh and blood. All the nation of Israel is akin to our apostle, as all descending of one blood. So this same apostle tells, that all the men in the world do, Acts xvii. 26, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." Men of all nations are akin: for they are all of one blood. Nay, that of the prophet seems to bring the kindred something nearer, Isa. lviii. 7; "That thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh." The prophet's meaning is, That thou hide not thyself from the poor, when he comes to seek relief and comfort from thee.—A poor, tattered miserable creature, that, it may be, thou wouldest scorn to look upon, or be loath to come near, or have any thing to do withal; yet, for all thy goodness, he is 'thine own flesh.'

II. For God's sake. Because he commands it, urges it, and it is pleasing to him. Dost thou love God? This love of God is to keep his commandments. And there is hardly any command, that is urged more, than love, and unity, and affection, one towards another.

III. A third bond that should tie us to love our neighbour, is, For his soul's sake. This was that that especially moved the apostle to such an affection towards his nation. He had as little cause upon any outward or carnal respect to love them, as a man could have. They were, indeed, his brethren, but brethren-enemies; they were his kinsmen, but spiteful kinsmen: he never enjoyed peace or safety for them. When were they not clamouring against, accusing, whipping, persecuting, imprisoning him, and seeking his life? And yet he cannot but love them, wish them well, for their souls' sake.



You would think the apostle little loved the incestuous person, 1 Cor. v; but his very severity was out of love to his soul, "That the spirit might be saved." When he gave up Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, one would think he heartily hated them, when he dealt so severely with them: but it was, that, if possible, good might accrue to their souls. For consider his reason of that action,—“I have given them up to Satan.” Why? Not that I might plague them, revenge myself on them, bring them to ruin: but “that they might learn not to blaspheme,” 1 Tim. i. 20: that, if it may be, they may learn better manners and religion.

“The king’s daughter is black, but comely,” Cant. i: black, because the sun hath looked upon her. She was born in the Morian’s land. But she is ‘glorious within;’ because of her virtuousness and goodness. The sinful souls of men, as they are sinful, are black, deformed things; but as they are souls, and in regard of their essential constitution, they are lovely and precious. And there is more in any soul in the world to move thee to love him, than there is in his person or actions to move thee to hate him.

And how great is the beauty of the soul, when it carries the image of God himself! Even the poorest and most contemptible soul in the world, carries the image of God upon it. It is God’s own argument against murder, Gen. ix. 6, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God, made he man.” The very same may be used against the hating of our neighbour, the seed of murder; “Thou shalt not hate thy neighbour; for in the image of God, he made thy neighbour.”

*Object.* But I had thought, that, by the fall of man, the image of God had been quite lost from him: for I have often heard, that every man is born in the sinful image of Adam: but the glorious image of God is utterly gone off from him. And so the apostle, Rom. iii. 23, “We have all sinned, and come short of the *glory* of God.”

*Answer.* Do you not observe, that, Gen. i. 26, where mention is made of Adam’s creation, that “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness?”—where the image of God refers to the essence of man’s soul; the likeness, to the qualities. The qualities were holiness and righteousness in the likeness of God. And so the apostle, Eph. iv. 22, &c. tells, That, when any soul is restored again to



the likeness of God, it is in holiness and righteousness. This is utterly lost in human nature, till grace restore it in any person. But the image of God, that is in the soul,—viz. as the soul is a spiritual, understanding, immortal, substance; that is not extinguished by sin, nor cannot be by any thing. And so, when God forbids murder, he doth it with this argument, That he that kills a man, destroys one that carries the image of God.—And yet, then the likeness of God in man, holiness and righteousness, was utterly gone: but the image of God, in these essential constitutives in soul, were still remaining in him.

Upon that saying of God, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man:” if any man question, ‘Is this meant of every man in the world?’ Can any doubt it, unless the murder of some men were allowed, though of others forbidden? Upon the very same argument, we may urge the love of every man to every man, because, in the image of God, he created him. And if thou canst find any man, without the image of God in his soul, then hate him, and spare not.

But then it will farther be objected,—Then, by this argument, I should love the devil: for he was created in the image of God: that is, he is a spiritual, intellectual, immortal, substance, as well as any man’s soul.

I answer, He is so, indeed; but these two things make now the vast difference:—

First, He is in a sinful estate, utterly irrecoverable: and so we cannot say of any soul in the world. The apostle saith of the angels that fell, that “God cast them down into hell” upon their fall, 2 Pet. ii. 4. They are damned already irrecoverably: but you cannot say of any soul in the world absolutely, that it cannot be saved.

Whether all souls in the world be ‘salvabiles,’ ‘in a savable condition,’ we shall not dispute; nor whence their salvability comes, if it be so. But certainly you and I, nor no man in the world, can say of any man, that he cannot be saved. True, we may truly and justly say, that if he continue and die in such and such sins, and wicked courses, he cannot be saved: but of his soul, considered in its bare essence, we cannot say so. Nay, we must pray for his salvation. This, then, is that that beautifies a soul, and makes it



lovely, and upon which we are to love every man, because he hath a soul capable of enjoying God and salvation. Shall I hate any man's soul? It may be united to God.—Hate any man's body? It may be a temple of the Holy Ghost.—Any man's person? He may be an inheritor of eternal glory.—Scorn not poor Joseph; for all his rags and imprisonment, he may come to sit upon a throne. Despise not poor Lazarus; for all his sores and tatters, he may be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.

Secondly, Christ died for *souls*; he died not for *devils*. And this is no small demonstration of the excellency and preciousness of a soul,—viz. That the Son of God himself would die for it. It is, therefore, the apostle's argument, once and again, "Offend not him, for whom Christ died:"—"Destroy not him, for whom Christ died," Rom. xiv. 15.—1 Cor. viii. 7. 10. Darest thou hate him, for whom Christ died? Darest thou wrong him, for whom the Son of God would shed his blood?



# A S E R M O N<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

GENESIS, III. 20.

*And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.*

ADAM's story is all wonder: dust so raised to become so brave a creature: that bravery so soon lost; so soon repaired, and so hugely repaired to a better condition. That he is sensible of in the text; therefore, "he calls his wife's name Eve, because mother to all living." He had named her 'quoad sexum,' 'as to her sex,' chap. ii. 23: now he gives her another name of distinction. Then she was called 'woman,' because she was taken out of 'man:' now 'Eve,' because 'all living' were to come out of her. Adam showed wisdom in naming the beasts; here he shows that and more,—viz. faith and sense of his better estate. She was rather the 'mother of death,' having done that, that brought death into the world; but he, sensible of a better life to come-in by her, calls her 'Eve,' 'life,' as the word signifies.

Lay this to that, in John i. 4: "In him was life," speaking of Christ, "and the life was the light of men." Eve was the mother of all living:—viz. of Christ, and all that live by him.

So that hence I make this observation, "That Adam and Eve believed and obtained life." For the proof of this, let us view their story.

I. God saith, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," ver. 15. Satan had accompanied with them, till this promise came. He keeps to them, to cheer them; he persuaded them to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord. But now she sets him at defiance. She sees her error; "the serpent (saith she) deceived me:" grows at enmity with him, having now a surer comfort promised, to rely upon.

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1303.



II. "God clothed them with skins," ver. 21. Which is an evidence that they *sacrificed*. For they had no need of slaying beasts for any other purpose: flesh they might not eat. They were slain for sacrifice, and their skins served for clothing. Thus body and soul were provided for. And in these sacrifices they looked after Christ; and saw him in figure. The first death in the world was Christ's dying in figure. Noah knew clean and unclean beasts, and sacrificed. This, undoubtedly, he had learned from the beginning.

III. Observe that, Luke i. 70; "As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began;" hinting, that, from the very beginning of the world, there were prophets of the Messias. Thus Adam was a prophet of Christ: and prophesied of him in the name of Eve; signifying 'life.' And Eve prophesied of him in the name of Cain, Gen. iv. 1: "She conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord:" or, "I have gotten a man, the Lord:" as the words may be rendered. And in the name Seth, Gen. iv. 25; "She bare a son, and called his name Seth; for God, saith she, hath appointed me another seed."

IV. The promise of the Messiah was not given to a cast-away. It was given to Abraham, and David, and others, that were righteous men.

V. Religion began to be planted by Adam. Cain and Abel brought sacrifice to God:—which shows, that religion had been planted before.

VI. Christ prevailed against the serpent from the beginning, and had a seed. The church began with Adam. Else what confusion would there have been in the world!

VII. The sabbath was given from the beginning, and Adam kept it.

VIII. All God's dealings with him were to forward faith in him. Such were his cursing the ground; his expelling him out of Eden; his enjoining him sacrifice, and the sabbath.

IX. Adam is ranked with holy ones, Gen. v. These things, laid together, may be sufficient to prove, that Adam and Eve believed and obtained life.

Secondly, Let us now, in the next place, view the means of their believing.

A new covenant was made with them. They were under



two covenants in one day. As Noah saw two worlds,—so Adam saw an old creation and a new. As it was said of him, “*Idem dies vidit consulem et exulem;*” “The same day saw him consul, and a banished man;”—so the same day saw Adam under two vastly different conditions, according to the tenor of the two covenants. The form of either covenant was not expressed plainly, but resulting. The covenant of grace, and the covenant of works, both somewhat obscure to him. But,

I. The enjoyment of God was necessarily intimated in both: not the enjoyment of the creature. Adam was made a reasonable soul for this purpose.

II. Obedience was the way. This is a duty to God, and this is the way of the enjoyment of him: when we conform to God.

III. He saw he had now lost obedience, and the power of obedience. He had lost God, and the power of the enjoyment of him.

IV. God held out one, that should recover him. And he, 1. A root of a seed, as Adam was. 2. Of an infinite righteousness and obedience beyond Adam. 3. One that should, by obedience, destroy the works of the devil for his own seed.

V. Adam saw no way of recovery, but by trusting in him. God must be satisfied, he could not do it: obeyed, he could not obey. Therefore, he had no way, but to cast himself on Christ's obedience.

VI. The covenant only held out Christ, to be trusted and believed on. Obedience was required even by the law of nature; and creatureship-faith was therefore enforced, because they could not perfectly obey.

VII. The promise given in the curse of Satan, that God would “put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent,” and that the woman's “seed should bruise the serpent's head:” this had that effect upon them, that they set themselves to defy Satan, and cleave to the seed promised.

VIII. That mercy, that created them in an instant so perfect, recovered them in an instant.

Thirdly, Let us now, in the third place, view their condition under believing.

I. They were now representative no more, as they were



of mankind before the fall. They were stated in another representative, Christ. Now, they acted for themselves, and he for them. Hence their faith was not imputed to posterity, though their sin was.

II. They were built on another foundation, than they were before. Then it was on nature, self-holiness, freedom of will; sandy foundations, because changeable. Now on a rock, grace, and the righteousness of Christ.

III. Now they have the Spirit of God working in them. With Christ God gave his Spirit: whereas, before, they had only natural abilities.

IV. Now they were under a promise; before, not. That, "Christ should break the head of the serpent," contained the promise of all good things.

V. They were under such evangelical revealings, that they wanted nothing needful for salvation.

The improvement of this discourse shall be in two or three uses:—

I. This magnifies God's grace to them and mankind. How great is this grace! which will appear, if you consider these things:—

1. There was as much done to provoke God for ever, as was possible. Compute the sin of Adam with all its circumstances.

2. Here was greater mercy, than to the angels that fell.

3. Nay, than to the angels that fell not.

4. Grace restored man to a better condition than he was in before. We may admire all this, and resolve all into grace.

What comfort, then, is here to poor sinners! Look on an example, that of St. Paul, who was the chief of sinners, yet grace was exceeding abundant towards him, 1 Tim. i. 14, 15; "He was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious:"—here were sins like scarlet, yet forgiven. You, that are under the pangs of conscience, consider this grace. Thou canst not sin so heinously, as Adam did, if thou addest not wilfulness and impenitency; nor fall so high, nor damn posterity, as he did; and yet he obtained pardon. Take one example more: there were some pardoned, that crucified the second Adam.

II. See the wretchedness of the sin of devils, that is be-



yond pardon. Their unpardonableness, in what lay it? In these two things:—

1. They sinned of pride and malice; Adam and Eve, of ignorance and weakness. Take heed of sinning proudly and presumptuously.

2. They were in the state of eternity: therefore, their change to evil was unchangeable. Man carried the plea of weakness in his nature; they, not.

III. There is the same grace, Christ, promise, covenant, from the beginning.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

1 JOHN, III. 12.

*Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother; and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

THESE words refer to ver. 11: "For this is the message, that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another:" and, indeed, to the tenor of all John's Epistles, every where exhorting to love, and not to be as Cain, "who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother."

He had given two marks of one not born of God, ver. 10: "Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God; neither he that loveth not his brother." They are both here in Cain; who was so far from love and righteousness, that he hated his brother, and slew him.

Wicked men's sins are set down, that we may avoid them as rocks: 1 Cor. x. 6; "These things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." But Cain's sin reads more. It is the first story after the fall: and it shows,

I. The enmity betwixt the seeds.

II. What poison Satan had breathed into man's nature. The Holy Ghost, in that story, bids us look on him: "Thou art the man." This is man fallen.—Of Seth it is said, Gen. v. 3, that he was begot in "Adam's image:" here it needs not be said, it is so plain.

In the words we have a description of the father and that eldest son,—viz. the devil and Cain.

I. The devil described by a most proper denomination, ὁ πονηρὸς, 'The wicked one.'

II. Cain, by his extraction and action: 'He was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.' We will first clear these, and then make some observations from them.

I. The denomination of the devil, 'that wicked one.' So he is styled, Matt. xii. 45; "Then goeth he, and taketh with

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1306.



himself seven other spirits more *wicked* than himself."—Eph. vi. 16; "Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the *wicked*." So some understand that petition in the Lord's prayer, *ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, "Deliver us from evil:" that is, *the evil one*. Nay, Ephes. vi. 12, the devil is called 'wickedness' in the abstract: "We wrestle, &c, against spiritual *wickedness*, in high places."

First, He is called *ὁ πονηρὸς*, 'the wicked one,' in opposition to *ὁ ἅγιος*, 'The holy one.' As the unclean spirit is opposed to the Holy Spirit,—so the wicked, to the holy. As the children of God and the children of the devil are opposed, ver. 10,—so here in regard of their nature. There are some, therefore, that define the devil by what is most contrary to God.

1. He is become contrary. As "Christ and Belial, light and darkness," 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. In what? Not in regard of his essential subsistence, as he is a spirit, intellectual, immortal: nor in regard only of want of righteousness and holiness: but in regard of the bent of his will. As, in ourselves, we may read too much of the devil in that respect, that our wills run so contrary to God's. No, contrary to that that will be the contrary: as Hannibal was to the Romans. For,

2. He sets himself to be contrary. He is called *ὁ ἀντικείμενος*, 'he that opposeth.' His contrariety is resolved, and wilful. In the first fall, he set himself up against God, to be head. He despised his charge: and would head the creature against him. And he continually fights against God's will and ways. See those two things, ver. 10, which distinguish the children of God and of the devil, *love* and *righteousness*: the same make the distinction between God and the devil: God loves man; he hates him:—God loves righteousness; he opposeth it. He stands up against Christ. There are two heads in the world, Christ and the devil: and he by his own pride and putting on.

Secondly, He is the 'wicked one,' as he is the father of wickedness. As, John viii. 44; "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Ask who begat wicked works? the answer must be,—The devil.

1. He is father of his own wickedness. He is his own tempter, and begat his sin within himself: whereas Adam had something 'ab extra,' 'from without,' that tempted him.



2. He is the father of other's wickedness; ver. 8, "He that committeth sin, is of the devil." He was the father of the first sin. How might Adam have stood, if not tempted by one above him! He could not have believed a creature could be against God; but believed him one, that was as a messenger from God, as angels were. He is the father of all sins. He hath concurrence to every sin we commit: a general concurrence by poison infused into our nature. As sin hath a general concurrence to death,—so the devil hath such a concurrence to sin. And such a particular concurrence, as we cannot say any sin is without him,—as no grace is without the Spirit. I shall not speak of his presence with all, his influence with all.

Thirdly, He is *ὁ πονηρὸς*, 'the wicked one,' in that he is perfectly wicked. That is perfect, "*cui nihil addi potest, vel detrahi*," "to which nothing can be added or taken away." So God is perfect: and so is the saint's happiness, in glory, perfect happiness. The devil can be no more wicked or less: as God can be no more or less good. In Satan's first sin he could sin no more than he did; nor against more light; nor could his sin be of more pride and malice. He knew he should be damned, if he fell; yet he sinned and fell. His continual sinning cannot be more than it is; he cannot have more hate of God, than he hath: for he hates every thing, that is like God, or likes him. And that, not because God damned him, but because God is God above him. Nor can he be less wicked. For an angel cannot sin at a less rate than the deepest wilfulness and malice; cannot be tempted, deceived, ignorant; wants not power to stand. And thus we see, how the devil is the 'wicked one.' Now,

II. We come to the description, that is given of Cain, and that is twofold,—viz. by his *extraction*, "he was of that wicked one:" and by his *action*, "and slew his brother."

I. Let us consider him with relation to his extraction. "He was of that wicked one." Such a phrase you have, John viii. 44, mentioned before, "You are of your father the devil."

It may be questioned, whether all, in an unregenerate state, may be said alike to be of the devil. They are all "children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3;—whether are they all alike "children of the devil?"

I answer, 1. All are alike guilty, and children of corruption. Sin is come over all. One hath as much original guilt,



as another. Because Adam's whole sin is on all, as Christ's whole righteousness is on his.

2. One hath as much sinfulness and depravation of nature, as another. Abel as much as Cain. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23; because all alike from Adam.

3. All "children of wrath" alike, Eph. ii. 2, that is, first, 'Quoad meritum,' 'in respect of merit;' secondly, 'Quoad indignationem Dei in peccatum,' 'in respect of God's indignation against sin:' but not 'quoad æternam iram,' 'in respect of eternal wrath.'

4. All slaves to Satan alike, which that expression doth suppose; where it is said, that "we are delivered out of the power of darkness."

But all are not under the claim of Satan alike. The elect have God claiming something in them, even before they escape from the bondage of Satan: as Israel in Egypt before their redemption, God had a claim to them.

Therefore, men are not said to be 'of the devil,' but where the visible acting is according to the devil. So, in the place quoted already, John viii. 44; "Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do."—1 John iii. 8: "He that committeth sin, is of the devil."—And in the text, "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother."—So the Pharisees were of the 'seed of the serpent;' Elymas was the 'child of the devil.' And from hence I lay down this doctrine:—

That wicked men's wicked actings show they be of the wicked one.—See ver. 8: Cain had pious education, taught to sacrifice. His parents could tell him more of God and the devil, than almost any since. He made an outward profession; for he brought his sacrifice to God: yet his works manifested him to be of the wicked one. So wicked ones, by their wicked actings, show, that they belong to the 'wicked one.' They are of him, that is, 1. Of his kingdom, and pay a subjection to it. 2. Of his spirit. 3. Of his acting. And this brings us to the next particular,—viz.

II. To consider Cain with relation to his action: he 'slew his brother:' "He was of that wicked one, and slew his brother." Here we may observe three things 'obiter,' 'by the way.'

First, That malice and murder is justly referred to the



first murderer. As, John viii. 44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning:"—ye would murder me, because ye are of the murderer.

Secondly, The first man dying was Christ in figure; as the first death, that of sacrifice, was Christ in figure also. The Jews say, that, when Cain killed his brother, he made wounds in his hands and feet.

Thirdly, That Cain, who was first born into the world, should so miscarry. So the first estate of man miscarried. Eve hoped well of him, when she named him Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," or '*a man the Lord.*' But the first-born miscarried. And so Esau, the first-born, lost his birthright. But to return to our subject.

"He slew his brother."—We may cry, Murder, murder, with a witness. If it had been a stranger, that had been slain,—or an enemy,—or one that had been too many in the world; but a brother, an only brother, the only man in the world,—this vastly aggravates the crime. Fratricide is horrid; this without parallel, or possibility of parallel. It is justly said, that he was "of that wicked one:" else this story would have choked all belief. How think you, was Adam amazed, when he heard it: but when he resolved it thus, 'he is of him that murdered mankind,' this ceased his wonder. From hence I raise this doctrine,—'How much devilishness can the devil infuse into man's nature.'

This story is set first after the fall, to show how much of devil breathed in our nature, and how far it may be enhanced to devilishness. Seth was begotten in the image of Adam; Cain, of the devil. See, against how many divine and human laws and bonds he did this act.

1. It was besides reason. There was room enough in the world for both. It was not with them, as it was afterward with Lot and Abraham, Gen. xiii. 6; "The land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together." Nor as it was, after that, with Jacob and Esau, chap. xxxvi. 7; "Their riches were more, than that they might dwell together; and the land, wherein they were strangers, could not bear them because of their cattle."

2. It was contrary to reason. 1. In that they should have been mutually helpful. And, 2. Why should not Abel live as well as he?



3. It was contrary to nature. He was his brother-twin with him.

4. Contrary to the tender dealing of God.

5. Contrary to all reason and religion. He slew him, "because his works were righteous:" as Caligula slew a man, because he was a proper man.

But Cain was not alone: I might show as much devilishness appearing in others; as in Pharaoh, Ahab, Nero, &c, men in all things like the devil and Cain. And the reasons of this are,

1. Because the soul of man is capable of all evil, to all extremity. Not only that, Gen. vi. 5, "That the wickedness of man was great, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;" but he is capable of all manner and degrees of evil. Not only that in Matt. xv. 19, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies;" but these to the utmost extremity. That, in Rom. vii. 18, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" is short of the utmost extremity by far.

1. The soul is large enough to hold all evil. Immensity is part of the image of God in it: desires it hath, never satisfied; covetousness, voluptuousness, never satisfied: it is a gulf that never says, 'Enough.'

2. The spawn of original sin contains all sin in it: as a spark is enough to consume all, if fuelled: as the mud, after the overflowing of Nilus, produceth all monsters: and the leprosy spreads all over, if let alone. Consider these three things of our nature;—

First, It being contrary to God contains all evil, as he all good. It is a question in the schools, whether sin is contrary to God's nature or will? Our sinful nature is contrary to both. To his will, 1 Thess. iv. 3; "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." To his nature; he light, but we are darkness; he holiness, but we sin and impurity. Other creatures are not contrary to God, but divers and different from him: but sinful creature is contrary. Our nature, as evil, is contrary to the divine nature. Our misery is not only in the loss of the image of God, but in the obtaining the contrary image.

Secondly, There is nothing in our nature to limit its breaking out to evil. It is an untamed heifer, will bear no



yoke. It is like waters, running downward without bounds. Nay, there is that in us, that breaks all bounds,—as, the stirring of conscience, the motions of the spirit, education, laws; all bounds, but those of grace. Our principle is to please self, to have our own wills. Now, this consists of a hundred insatiable gulfs, to satisfy pride, covetousness, envy, lust. Self conjures up these devils: but there is nothing in us to conjure them down again. The body breeds a disease, but can master it: but the soul cannot, because it is overcome with content in its disease.

Thirdly, These distempers of our nature, are boundless in themselves: no bottom, no stop, but grace, or death.

II. Another reason, how it comes to pass, that there is so much devilishness in some men's nature, is, because the devil is still urging, and never saith, 'Enough.' As we are ever stirring evil in ourselves, so is he hatching evil in us. We read of some, "that were taken captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26.

But I will not insist any longer on the proof. Let us consider, in the next place, what sins are most devilish, and how men come up to them; James iii. 15, "This wisdom descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish." There are degrees of sin: first, earthly,—then, sensual,—and lastly, devilish. The devil himself is without an earthly mind, and without sensuality. He is not covetous; he offers Christ 'all the kingdoms of the world,' Matt. iv.—Nor is he lascivious: they misconstrue Gen. vi. 2, that thought from thence, that the angels lay with women.—Nor is he luxurious. No, the devil flies at higher game,—to defy God, and damn souls. All sin bears his stamp, but some his picture: as, namely, these that follow:—

1. Pride; and to be puffed up against God, and his charge, and bounds, which he hath set. This is the devil's peculiar sin. See 1 Tim. iii. 6; "Not a novice; lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

2. Hatred and cruelty. Satan is an enemy, a murderer, John viii. 44,—a roaring lion, and devours them that serve him.

3. Enmity against righteousness, and the ways of God. See ver. 10 of this chapter. His name is 'Satan;' that is, an 'enemy' to what is good.



4. Lying and falsehood. That appeared sufficiently in the story of the fall. And in John viii. 44, "He is a liar, and the father of it."

Now, are not some as devilish as the devil himself in these?—1. In pride. Some will be called gods; as Alexander, Caligula, Sejanus. It is said of antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 4, that "he opposeth and exalteth himself against all, that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Are not thousands as proud in heart as the devil himself, as much as they can be, and delight in it? 2. In hatred and cruelty. One would not believe, that man could be so cruel to man, but that we have the experience of it; and this truth in the text tells us the reason of it, because they are "of the wicked one." Men are more cruel than beasts. Beasts have been tamed, but man cannot; James iii. 7, "Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed, by man kind:" but only mankind itself is untameable. Such an example was he, that wished that "all Rome had but one head, that he might cut it off at once." Nay, he in the story of China went farther, who actually slew six hundred thousand innocent persons. 3. Do not some hate the ways of God, as the devil doth? "I hate Micaiah," saith Ahab. There were some that spake evil of the Christians, only "because they ran not into the same excess of riot" with themselves. 4. And so we may say of lying. There are children of falsehood among us.

To conclude all with some uses from this discourse:—

I. The consideration of this may draw tears, to think of the corruption of our nature, so far degenerate from its excellency and end.

II. It may make us mourn to consider what we carry within us, if God leave us.

III. Not to think so little of pride, envy, lying, as most do. For these sins are the nearest resemblances of the devil.

IV. How great a work is renovation: for men to be made 'partakers of the divine nature' [2 Pet. i. 4], who had so much before partaken of the devil's!

V. We had need to pray, that God would keep us from such mischief.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

GENESIS, IV. 15.

*And the Lord set a mark upon Cain; lest any, finding him, should kill him.*

WE have seen Cain's sin: here we see his strange reward. Cain slew his brother; God will not have Cain slain. How is this agreeable to that, chap. ix. 6; "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." How strange this providence! Abel might have done good, if he had lived,—Cain, not: yet, behold! this contrary providence; Abel dies, and Cain lives. What would Cain wish more than this, to live and be secure? What would some give for such a patent? If he live, what murders more may he commit? What a discouragement may he be to righteousness! How may the eye of human reason stand amazed at this providence! We may take up that of Jeremiah, chap. xii. 1; "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet, let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" And the words of Habakkuk, chap. i. 3, 4; "Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore, the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous: therefore, wrong judgment proceedeth." And, "Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?" Yet, what righteousness seems in this? We may satisfy ourselves concerning this, by these considerations:—

I. Abel was happier dying, than Cain living. Balaam was a parallel of Cain, justifying this, Num. xxiii. 10, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

II. The righteousness of God's providences, is not to be judged of only according to outward appearance. God's

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1310.



‘judgments are a great deep;’ and ‘the footsteps of them are not known.’

III. The greatest seeming earthly prosperity, may be the greatest punishment. In the words we observe this:—

That God reserved Cain to long life:—but how he managed it, is scrupulous. וַיִּשֶׂם לוֹ אֹת “He set a mark upon him.” Rab. Solomon saith, it was a letter in his forehead: some say, it was a horn: some, a trembling, that all might know him for a fratricide, for a wretch that murdered his brother. But this, one would think, rather was the way to get him killed. For how could all that met him, know God’s mind by this mark (whatever it was), namely, that God would not have him killed? Therefore, Aben Ezra understands it, that God gave him a sign, till he believed it,—viz. that God would preserve his life. And so it may best be construed: That “God set him a sign, lest,” &c.

In the fourteenth verse, Cain says, “Behold, thou hast driven me out, this day, from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth: and it shall come to pass, that every one, that findeth me, shall slay me.” It is questioned here, whether Cain begs death, or declines it. If he begs it, God denies him; if he declines it, he hath his desire with a curse. Hence we gather this doctrine:—

That God’s letting men go on uninterrupted in their sins, is the greatest punishment they can have here.

Doubtless Cain was loaden with punishment. Suppose a council were called, what to do with Cain. You would say, “Cut him off:” God’s wisdom and justice saith, “Let him live.” Long life and prosperity, in itself a blessing, but here a prison, a curse; a poison, that kills with delight. Consider Cain’s temper, and then consider him banished from the church, and from the memorials of his duty, that God’s constant service would give him,—turned loose to his lusts, and the counsels of his own heart: the longer he lives in this condition, it is not the better, but the worse, for him. See ver. 24: “Cain was avenged sevenfold.” It was a sore judgment, when God said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man,” Gen. vi. 3; I will trouble them no more: [Hos. iv. 14,] “I will not punish your daughters, when they commit whoredom.” It is a great question, whether is worse,—to be cut off in sin, or to be not interrupted in it.



A hard choice, as David's was, when he said, "I am in a great strait." For the clearing of this, observe these two things:—

I. That sometimes the long-suffering of God to the wicked, is not the goodness of God to them. See 1 Pet. iii. 20; "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water:" compared with Gen. vi. 3; "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." God spared the Canaanites, that their measure might be full. "Fulfil ye the measure of your fathers," saith Christ to the Jews, Matt. xxiii. 32.—And Psal. lxxiii. 4; "There are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm." But, ver. 19, "How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors."—So God tells Pharaoh, "I have preserved thee alive, that I might make my power known in thee."

II. Sometimes, God's forbearance to cut off the wicked, is for their punishment: not only when he strikes them with horror, as he did Lamech, but when they prosper. "Let Ephraim alone," was Ephraim's punishment.

The uses of this discourse might be these:—1. To examine, while we live and prosper, whether it be for our punishment. 2. To be jealous of an untroubled condition. 3. This may teach, with more patience and cheerfulness, to bear the cross. For, as God's suffering men to succeed and prosper, is sometimes a judgment, a token of his displeasure; so, afflictions and troubles may be signs of his care and goodwill. 4. Not to envy the prosperity of the wicked. 5. To labour so to live, as to be able to give a comfortable account of long life and age.



# A S E R M O N,

PREACHED UPON

EXODUS, XX. 5.

*For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.*

THE first commandment with threatening; as Paul saith, the first of the second table was the first with promise, Ephes. vi. 2. And the threatening is most properly affixed to the command against idolatry: because God hath a special enmity and quarrel against idolatry, as one of the greatest derogations to his honour, that can be in the world.

Observe, in the prophets, the great complaint against the people is, for idolatry and unrighteousness: the former, the great injury done to God; the latter, to men: the former, the height of impiety; the latter, of uncharitableness. When man is bound to love his neighbour as himself, to show him mercy, to be helpful to him, and useful to him in all ways of charity; how high an iniquity is it to defraud, undermine, oppress, and deal injuriously with, him! And when bound to worship God alone, as the great, dreadful, and glorious, Creator of heaven and earth, and all things in them; how abominable a wickedness is it to give this honour to a piece of wood, a stock, or stone, of our own framing!

How God detests this, he hath uttered abundantly in Scripture, partly, by proclaiming idols to be 'abominable' to him; Deut. vii. 25, and xxvii. 15:—and by giving them names of the greatest abomination: 'vanities,' 1 Kings xvi. 26, Jer. xiv. 22: 'lies,' Isa. xliv. 20, Jer. x. 14. And so is that to be understood, Rev. xxii. 15, "Without, are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Jonah putteth both the names together; Jonah ii. 8, "They that observe lying vanities." Nay, the very name of 'abomination' itself is given them, 1 Kings xi. 7.—Nay, the very name of 'devils' is given them, Deut. xxxii. 17, 1 Cor. x. 20. And as thus,



in his word, he hath showed his detestation against idols and idolatry,—so hath he, also, in his providence, by those fearful judgments, that he hath showed against them, that have been idolatrous. Witness Jeroboam and his house; Ahab and his, rooted out, and devoured, by this deadly canker: themselves and their posterity undone, according to the threatening here, “visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children.”

It were a wonder and thing of amazement, that the church of Rome should ever be so zealous for images, were it not that there is something more behind the curtains, than is seen. They distinguish betwixt an ‘image’ and an ‘idol;’ and say, “They worship not the image, but bow before it only for a memorandum.” But, to omit the vanity of such a distinction, which hath been abundantly confuted by our divines, where is their care of that rule of the apostle, “To avoid all appearance of evil?” Certainly, if there be not the appearance of idolatry in worshipping before an image, what call you the appearance of idolatry? The heathen persecutors, of old, thought their turn served, if they could bring Christians to cast a little incense into the fire, before an idol. Here the Christians might have pleaded, ‘It was not in worship to idols, but to please their masters:’ but they saw in it so much appearance of idolatry, that they gave up their lives rather, than to consent to such an ‘appearance of evil.’

But that, that is behind the curtains with the Papists, is covetousness, and gain of money. And, if it were not that, I make no question, but they would be far cooler in pleading for their images, than they are. It is upon very good reason that the apostle calls *covetousness*, ‘idolatry;’ for it is not only making money our God, but it is the very father and mother of idolatry. This is it, that hath made these men so bold with adoring of images; so bold, as to take away this commandment against idolatry out of the ten, though a command so needful, so dreadful, and that hath so terrible a threatening with it, “For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.”

A command, that one might wonder at, but that you can never enough wonder at the wickedness of men’s hearts.

First, One would wonder, that ever such a command should be needed: “Thou shalt not worship a stock or stone; nor make that thy God, which thine own hands have made.” Reason, and light of nature, and common sense (one would



think), should so cry this down to men, that have their wits about them, that there might not any such command from God be needful. You may see, how the Spirit of God does stand, as it were, wondering at the sottishness of those, that make and worship idols, in Isa. xl, and three or four chapters forward. And did you see a heathen, or do you see a Papist, worshipping and bowing down to the stock of a tree, as he calls it there; whether have you more cause to mourn to see God so dishonoured,—or to think, what a stock and stupid thing sinful man is become, to pray to, or trust in, a piece of wood or stone?

Secondly, One might wonder, that such a law, given, should be so broken. A law so easy to keep, and in so senseless a thing to break it: of all sins, what easier to avoid, than falling down to the stock of a tree? And yet, how were men infatuated with it, as the heathen and Israel were continually. Who would have thought, that Israel, having seen the wonders in Egypt, and the glory of God at Sinai, should ever, especially so suddenly, have worshipped a golden calf, and said, “These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!”

What monstrous madness and senselessness is there, in this idolatry!—that, 1. Whereas God made man,—for man to think that he can make a god. 2. Man, that can see, and hear, and speak, and stir, to think that his help should lie in that, that can neither see, nor hear, nor speak, nor stir. 3. For a man to fall down before that, that he can cast into the fire, water, dirt, and trample under feet; and the image not able to say, “What doest thou?” 4. It being in the power of man to make his image, in the likeness of man or beast,—then, when it is made, to think it hath power over him; and he to owe homage, and duty, and sacrifice, and devotion, to it. So brutish, foolish, besotted, a thing is man, when left unto himself, and his own wisdom.

And, therefore, there was need of such a commandment against such sottishness; and of ties and terrors added, to affrighten men from the folly: as there are two, you see, in the words I have read:

I. That God proclaims himself “a jealous God.”

II. That he professeth, he “visiteth the fathers upon the children.”

I. It is no wonder God proclaims himself “a jealous God”



in this case, when the love, service, and worship, due to him, is given to an idol, to a piece of wood or stone, silver or gold. Conceive, in your hearts, what jealousy is; and you will find it no wonder, he is so in this case, or, indeed, in any other, where his honour is given away, and bestowed upon any creature. This title is oft given him in Scripture; and, if we well consider what jealousy is in man or woman, we shall read terror in the title, when God giveth it to himself.

He professeth it to be his name, *Exod. xxxiv. 14*: "The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." Read it again, and tremble; "The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."—Moses glosses upon it with a gloss of more terror, *Deut. iv. 24*: "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." As if he had said, "Does any ask, What God's jealousy means? It means, a consuming fire." And so the prophet *Zephaniah* explains it also, *chap. i. 18*; "The whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy."—And again, *chap. iii. 8*, "For all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy." What fire was that, that devoured Sodom and Gomorrah? The fire of God's jealousy.—What fire was that, that consumed Jerusalem, and laid it in ashes? Was it the fire the Chaldeans put to it at the first sacking of it,—and the Romans, at the second? No; it was, indeed, the fire of God's jealousy.—What is that, that consumeth ungodly men, as stubble; that unquenchable fire, that devoureth the chaff, when God cometh to purge his floor? It is the fire of God's jealousy.—The prophet *Nahum* doth yet clear it farther, *chap. i. 2*; "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious: the Lord will take vengeance of his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies." The rest of the verse is an exposition of the first clause, "God is jealous." What means that? And read the first clause in the text, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." What means that? An avenging God,—a God that avengeth in fury,—that taketh vengeance on his adversaries,—and reserveth wrath and vengeance in store for his enemies, and them that hate him.

But, that we may view God's jealousy the better, and with the more dread and trembling (and, oh! that we could ever feelingly consider, that "the Lord our God is a jealous God"), let us first consider the nature of jealousy in men or women,—and, by that, arise to apprehend, what this jealousy is in God.



‘Zealous’ and ‘jealous’ are comprehended under one and the same word, in the Hebrew tongue: and ‘zealousness’ and ‘jealousy’ are uttered, in that language, in the very same syllables: קנאה signifies both. In those allegations out of Zephaniah, “The land shall be devoured קנאתו by the fire of *his jealousy*: קנאתי by the fire of *my jealousy*.” Now, the same word is used elsewhere, in a sense most sweet and comfortable: that whereas it comes, in some places, like Elias’s fire, and earthquake, and wind, that rent the rocks in terror and dreadfulness; in other places, it comes, like the still voice, in sweetness and comfort. In Isa. ix. 6, 7, where he is speaking of Christ, his names, and kingdom, that he should be called, “Wonderful, Counsellor,” &c; and that “of the increase of his government and peace, there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order and establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth, even for ever,”—he concludes, קנאת, “*the zeal* of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” And so Isa. xxxvii. 32, where he promiseth comfortable things to his distressed people, and saith, “Out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant;” and concludes, קנאת “*the zeal* of the Lord of hosts shall do this.” And one for all, Isa. lxiii. 15, קנאתך, “Where is *thy zeal*, thy strength, and the sounding of thy bowels?”

In zeal, is a fervent tincture of love. “The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up:” that is, ‘the fervent love I have to thy house.’ And, in jealousy, is a high tincture of love. And, accordingly, love and jealousy are joined, and made as one thing, Cant. viii. 6. In zeal is love, and forwarding that we are zealous of. In jealousy, love and anger at that, that provokes to jealousy. A man is jealous of his wife,—or the wife, of her husband; the bottom of it is love, but the top is anger.—The bottom love! how?—It is said, that jealousy is too much love. But that rule fails: for a man may be jealous of his wife he loves not. And yet the bottom of jealousy is love. For a man, though he love not the person of his wife, yet he loves to have the affection of his wife entirely to himself: and cannot endure, that her affections, that are due to him, should be given to another; but disdains it, and is angry at it.

By this we may conceive of the jealousy of God, only adding the observation of that expression that is so frequent,—viz. God’s complaining that his people “went a whoring



from him," Hos. i. 2; "The land hath committed great whoredom in departing from the Lord:" and so 'went a whoring after other gods.' God takes it in anger and disdain, that men should give away those hearts, affections, that love and service, that is due to God,—to any thing besides God. God doth very oft title the church of Israel, his 'children,' and oft his 'wife,' that he had married to himself, Jer. iii. 1; he had taken them for his wife, 'she had played the harlot with many lovers;' yet if she would return, he would take her again. So, Hos. iii. 1, and in divers other places. And the expression is very proper: for he had forsaken all other nations, and clave only to her.

I shall not insist to show, how far the parallel fits any Christian nation, that God hath taken more peculiarly to himself by the administration of his covenant among them: nor shall I insist to show, how far England may be called the spouse of God, by his choice. It is undeniable, that we have all married ourselves to God, by our baptismal covenant, and by our sacramental and other engagements. And then, what doth the Lord require of us, but that we should be faithful to our husband, and not give ourselves, our hearts, and affections, to any thing besides him? not our worship, to an idol,—not our affections, to the world,—our hearts, to pleasure or profit, or earthly vanities; which is to go a whoring from our husband? "The Lord our God is a jealous God:" and what can we expect, if we serve him so, but that his jealousy will break out in fire and vengeance?

By his law, concerning jealousy betwixt man and wife, he hath showed thee, O man, what thou mayest expect betwixt thee and God; Num. v. 12, to the end. He appointed that the suspected wife be brought to trial; undertakes to work a miracle for her discovery; and, if guilty, upon drinking the bitter waters, her belly was to swell, her thigh to rot, and she to become a curse. And doth not the Lord discover, whether thy heart hath played the whore? and will he not bitterly punish in his own cause, as he did in the cause of men?

But to return to God's jealousy, against the sin of idolatry particularly, as this title of his, that he is a 'jealous God,' is peculiarly affixed to the command against idolatry. And here I shall show some particular evidences and instances of God's jealousy against this sin. And I shall name three



passages of the Spirit of God, in his style in Scripture, by which he doth hint his distaste and abominating of this sin of idolatry: and three passages of God, in his providence and disposal, that intimate the same: and all such, as are not obviously observed by every reader of Scripture.

First, To mention the passages of the Holy Ghost's style in reference to this sin.

I. Observe that in 2 Sam. xi. 21, "Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth?" Abimelech was the son of Jerubbaal, or Gideon, as you may see, Judg. ix, where you have Abimelech's story. Why, then, does the Holy Ghost here misname Gideon, and, instead of Jerubbaal, call him Jerubbesheth? The reason is, because Baal was the general name of an idol, and the Holy Ghost, in detestation of idolatry, changeth the name *Baal*, which signifieth a *Lord*, into *Bosheth*, which signifies *shame*. And he calleth Gideon 'Jerubbesheth,' instead of 'Jerubbaal,' because Gideon had made an idol, that all "Israel went a whoring after," Judg. viii. 27.

Of the same observation is that, that the son of Saul, whom his father named *Esh-baal*,—the Holy Ghost, in his story, nameth *Ishbosheth*. You have a large story of Ishbosheth, Saul's son, in 2 Sam. ii. Now, look among Saul's sons where they be reckoned, and you find no such name; 1 Chron. viii. 33, "Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchi-shua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal." That Esh-baal is he, whom the Holy Ghost, in his story, calls Ishbosheth, as detesting the name Baal, the name of an idol: changing it into the name 'Bosheth,' 'shame.' As the same Holy Ghost explains himself, and this matter, Jer. xi. 13; "According to the number of the streets of Jerusalem, have ye set up altars to that *shame*, even altars to burn incense to Baal."

II. In reading Rev. vii, where the sealed of the Lord of the twelve tribes are mentioned and numbered, have you observed that the tribe of Dan is wanting, and the tribe of Ephraim not named? You will find Manasses there, but not Ephraim by name, but Joseph instead of Ephraim, ver. 8. And what is the reason of this? Public idolatry first began in Dan, Judg. xviii. And the golden calves were set up by Jeroboam of Ephraim; and the one in Ephraim, and the other in Dan. And the Holy Ghost doth point, as it were, with the finger, at those idolatries, and show his dis-



taste and abhorring of them, when he will not so much as name the names, where they began, among the Lord's sealed for salvation.

III. As here mention is made of "visiting to the third and fourth generation," observe that passage, Matt. i. 8; and see whether the style of the Holy Ghost do not hint the very same thing: "Joram begat Ozias." Now, look in the story of the Kings and Chronicles, and you will find, that Joram begat Ahaziah, and Ahaziah Joash, and Joash Amaziah, and Amaziah Ozias. So that here, three descents are wanting, or dashed out: and Ozias is grandchild to Joram in the fifth generation. What is the reason? Look into the story of Joram, and you will find that he married the daughter of Ahab, the great idolater, and that he walked in the idolatries of Ahab, 2 Kings viii. 18. And here the Holy Ghost, to hint his distaste of such idolatry, blots out his children, to the third, nay, fourth, generation, out of the line and genealogy of our Saviour.

These and other things of the like nature, may be observed in the very style and dialect the Holy Ghost useth in Scripture. Whereby he setteth a brand upon idolatry, and idols, as things odious, and abominable, and abhorred of God in special manner.

Shall I, also, give you three like passages of providence, which, it may be, all of you have not observed in your reading; which speak the same thing, and proclaim the jealousy of God against idolatry?

I. Observe that, Deut. ix. 21: "And I took your sin, the calf which he had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, until it was as small as dust; and I cast the dust thereof into the brook, that descended out of the mount." And why all this ado, to burn, stamp, grind, it? And why cast the dust into the brook, and not on the earth or into the air? Why not into the dunghill, rather than into the water, that the people must drink? By this very thing, God would show, that he was a jealous God against idolatry, by putting the people to the very same trial for this idolatry, that the wife, suspected of adultery, was to be put to by the jealous husband, Num. v,—she was put to drink water and dust; and, if she proved guilty, her belly swelled, and her thigh rotted, and so gave plain evidence of her guilt. So, in this case, Moses bids the Levites,



Exod. xxxii. 27, "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." Now, how could they know, who had committed idolatry among so many hundred thousands? How could they pick out the men, that were guilty? Why, the discovery is in the very same way. The people drink the water, in which was the dust of the calf; and thereupon those, that were guilty, their bellies swelled, and some other miraculous evidence was given, whereby they were discovered, and whereby God discovered himself to be a jealous God, visiting the sins of idolaters.

II. A second passage is that about the battle at Gibeah, Judg. xx; concerning which, let us first take up the words of Deborah, chap. v. 8 (for though the history of that war is set many chapters after the story of Deborah, yet was it a great while before her, as might be showed by many evidences, if I would stand upon it): "They choose new gods (saith she); then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?" No sooner idolatry, but vengeance; no sooner new gods, but war in the gates: and war with a witness, that destroyed forty thousand of Israel, and above twenty thousand of Benjamin.

She speaks but of forty thousand that perished, as if no shield or spear had been among them all; whereas, in all, there fell sixty-five thousand. But she hints the sad slaughter of Israel; which was sent by God, and encouraged by him to go against Benjamin: and yet, when they went to battle, they fell forty thousand. Strange! to be sent by God, and yet miscarry: to be encouraged by God, and yet fall! Oh, they had "chosen new gods:" and thence this miscarriage. The tribe of Dan had set up idolatry, and all Israel quiet, and stir not against it, and so become partakers of it. But when a whore hath some unhandsome and hard usage at Gibeah, then all Israel is suddenly up in arms, to revenge her quarrel. Zeal for a whore to revenge her quarrel against Gibeah; but not zeal for the Lord to revenge his quarrel against idolatry. And, therefore, God takes the cause into his own hand, and shows himself a jealous God against idolatry; and caused forty thousand to fall in battle, though he had sent and encouraged them to it.

III. A third passage let be that, which yet comes more



near the text: nay, seems not only to come up to it, but to go beyond it: and that is, *Exod. xxxii. 34*; where, after the sin of the golden calf, and the Levites' slaying three thousand men, yet God still hath some anger in store for that sin, and saith, "Nevertheless, in the day, when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." When? The Jews say, That 'in every scourge and judgment, that came upon them, there was a remembrance and a lash for the golden calf.' And St. Stephen speaks no less, or more, in *Acts vii. 41, 42*; "They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, &c. Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven," &c. This speaks God a jealous God against idolatry; and seems to speak, that he "visits the sins of the fathers upon the children beyond the third and fourth generation" succeeding. To which thing, we shall speak in course, in handling of the words: to which now we are come.

II. Then, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," &c. All the question and scruple about the thing, is, 'quo jure?' Where is God's justice in this, to visit the sins of him that sinned, upon him that sinneth not; "sins of the fathers upon the children," who probably were never witting or assenting to the fathers' sin? It is God's strict commandment to men, *Deut. xxiv. 16*, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin." And doth not he go contrary to that rule himself, when he "visits the sins of the fathers upon the children?" And it is his proclaiming again, *Ezek. xviii. 4*, "Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die." And doth he not warp from that assertion, when children are punished for the sins of their fathers?

That God should impute the sin of Adam to all his posterity, hath been cavilled at in ancient times by some heretics; and, in these latter, some are not well satisfied about the matter; and cannot, or will not, see how God is just in it. "Visiting sins unto the third and fourth generation," sounds something harsh; this far more, 'visiting the sins of the first father upon all generations.' Shall he condemn millions of millions for the fault they never committed;



charge upon them the crime they never consented to? I shall not stay my discourse upon this. The answer is ready: In Adam was all mankind: in his covenant was enwrapped all human nature: and the violation of that covenant was the sin and guilt of whole human nature.

But we shall speak to other kind of examples, that come nearer to the sense of the words before us. And these are of two sorts,—viz. in reference to the body, or outward condition,—or to the soul, or inward.

First, Was not that hard measure, as you may think, that when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the parents only, had sinned, that not only they should go down quick into the pit, but their houses also, and all that appertained to them? Num. xvi. 32.—The like, that when Achan only was in the transgression, that his sons and daughters, and his very cattle, should be put to death, as well as he? Josh. vii. 24.

Secondly, Seems it not hard measure, that, when that generation, at the building of Babel, had only sinned against God in that design for setting-up idolatry, that not only they should be given up to idolatry and blindness; but the heathen, their posterity, to scores of generations? The like, that, when that generation only had sinned in murdering Christ, not only they should bear the guilt of his blood, but their posterity through so many ages.

For the unfolding of God's dealings in these things particularly, let me first move this general consideration:—

What care parents had need to take, that they sin not so, as to leave sin and guilt and a curse upon their children and posterity. Among their cares to leave them well,—as the word in the world goes, i. e. rich,—to be sure to take this care, that, while they leave them well, they leave them not ill. Sin not, for thy children's sake; that they smart not for thy faults, when thou art gone. I mention two sins particularly, that may draw misery, and entail a curse, upon the posterity,—cursing their children,—and unconscionably scraping a cursed estate together, to leave to their children.

Now, to assert the justice of God, in this case of 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers,' &c, either for these sins or others: whereas it seems a wrong to the children. Consider these things:—

I. It is most just with God, to punish wicked men in their dearest delights, that judgment may come home to



them to the quick: to take away the delight of their eyes and heart, that punishment may make them smart in the tenderest part. And when parents are so fond of that part of themselves, their children, that they will venture soul, and body, and all, to hell, for the advancement of their children,—is it any injustice in God to lash them in that part, that is most tender and delicate to them?

II. I might speak, that it appertains to divine justice, in special manner, to frustrate the designs of ungodly men, and to have them in derision, and to show that they are but fools; to ‘take the wise in their craftiness,’ and to bring their deep-plotted counsels and devices to nought. How frequently doth Scripture harp upon this string! Do I need to cite places? Job v. 12, 13, “He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, &c. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.”—Luke i. 51, “He scattereth the proud,” saith the holy Virgin: as if she pointed at the proud design of building Babel, which the Lord blasted: and scattered these proud plotters into all quarters of the earth. Places to this purpose are abundant.

Now, when an unconscionable gripe lays his design deep, by all means, right or wrong (he cares not), to advance his posterity,—and to build them up a house, though in blood and injury; and accounts all cock-sure: that divine eye and justice, that sits in heaven, laughs at his designs, and hath his counsels in derision. The man saith, “I will lay land to land, and house to house, and my children shall be great, and rich, and prosperous, in the world, and I will build up a family of renown.” But divine justice saith, “I will dash such confidence, and lay such unjust and unconscionable undertakings in the dust; that men may know, that there is a God; and that he is righteous, that judgeth the earth.” Arise, Lord, let not such men prevail; let such heathenish contrivers be judged in thy sight.

But, all this while, still the objection lies, That this is indeed justice to the father; but where is justice to the son, who sinned not, nor was partaker in his father’s wickedness?

For answer to which, we must first take up the last word, לִשְׂנֵא, “of them that hate me.” But who are meant, ‘parents’ or ‘children?’ Nay, who are those, that ‘hate God?’



Question the world through; and there is not a man upon earth, but he will deny and disclaim this. But, surely, the Scripture speaks not in vain, when it speaks so much of the 'haters of God,' as it doth. That ungodly men are meant, there is no doubt; and, in what sense they are said to hate God, we may take occasion to speak hereafter. Our present question is, when it speaks of them, that hate him, whether he means 'parents' or 'children,' or both? I may very truly answer, 'both.' And the meaning ariseth to this, "Visiting the sins of the fathers, that hate God, upon the children, that hate God: of wicked parents upon wicked children."

Observe the contrary clause, "Showing mercy unto thousands of them, that love me." Where, first, we may see some answer to the question just now moved,—Who are haters of God?—viz. they that love him not; for there is no medium. The opposites are not, that love him, and love him not; but that love him, and hate him. They that love him not, hate him.—Secondly, That which we would observe, is, That 'his showing mercy to thousands of them that love him,' implies, that every one loves him, that partakes of mercy. So 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation,' implies, that every generation hates him, that is so visited,—viz. when children imitate the wickedness of their parents. And so God states the point, Ezek. xviii. First, He begins with a 'righteous man,' ver. 5; and speaks of the particulars of his godliness, 'hath not eaten upon the mountains,' &c; and concludes, "He is just, he shall live," ver. 9. Then, at ver. 10, he proposeth the case, that, if such a good man beget a bad son, "a robber, a shedder of blood," &c; and of him he concludes, "He shall surely die, and his blood shall be upon him," ver. 13. Then, at ver. 14, he proposeth the case of that wicked man's son, that is not wicked like the father, "that seeth all his father's sins, which he hath done, and considereth, and doth not such-like," &c. He concludes, ver. 17, "He shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live." His father's sins shall not be visited on him, if he follow not his father's iniquity, ver. 20; "The soul that sinneth, shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be



upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

So that, first, no son is damned for the iniquity of his father (we speak not of the guilt of Adam's sin charged on his posterity, which is another case), but every one that is damned, is damned for his own sin. For so I take the word *die* in the prophet; "He shall *die*; his blood shall be upon him." A good son to be damned for the sin of a bad father, were to speak the ways of God very unequal indeed; and God contradicts that all along the chapter. Nay, a bad son is not damned for the sin of his father neither; nor does any such thing fall under the notion of God's 'visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children:' because every one that is damned, is damned for his own sin.

And, secondly, God visiteth not the sin of the fathers upon the souls of the children. God never made a soul sinful, because his father was wicked. Nay, God never made, or could make, any soul sinful, because he cannot be the author of sin. Nay, God never accounted a child wicked, because his father was wicked. For thus Hezekiah had been undone, the good child of Ahaz, as wicked a father, as who was most wicked. We spake of the heathen given up to idolatry, because of the first rebellion at Babel; and the Jews given up to blindness, because of the murder of Christ. But neither damned nor accounted wicked any heathens or Jews, that walked not in the same steps of those their wicked predecessors, in their blindness, idolatry, or unbelief, or other sins. So that,

Thirdly, God's 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,' &c, means by some bodily or external punishment, whereby the son is punished for his own sins, as well as his parents'. And the meaning of the passage is, that when God comes to visit the sins of wicked children upon them, he remembers the iniquity of their parents also against them, even in the third or fourth generation.

Shall I give you an instance in the sins of a good father, so visited upon wicked children, which may clear the visiting of the sins of a bad father upon wicked children? God had told David, that because of his killing Uriah with the sword, that "the sword should never depart from his house," 2 Sam. xii. 10. So his son Amnon perished by the sword; his son Adonijah, by the sword; and his son Absalom, in as



violent a manner.—Did not God remember David's sin, and his own threatening, in this? And yet, did not all these perish for their own sins? God visited their sin, and withal remembered their father's sin against them also. God damned none of them for David's sin; nor did God repute them sinful for David's sin: but if they were damned, they were damned for their own sin, and were reputed sinners in the sight of God, for their own sin. Yet, in the external punishment that fell upon them, there was a remembrance of their father's sin also. Hophni and Phinehas perished together in battle: their father's sin was visited upon them, which he is charged with, 1 Sam. ii. 29,—that “he honoured his sons more than God:” and yet they perished for their own sin. If they were damned, they were damned for their own sin, and not their father's; and were reputed wicked in the sight of God for their own sin, and not their father's. And yet, in the external punishment, that fell upon them, their father's sin was called to remembrance.

*Object.* But many a child is punished for his father's sin, that, it may be, is a good child; or, at least, is free and innocent from the sin of his father. Jeroboam's son was taken away in his prime, 1 Kings xiv: was not that for Jeroboam's sin, that God cut off his child? and he a good son, and that had not consented to his father's sin, ver. 13; “In him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel.” Here was justice, indeed, against the father; but where was it to the son, to cut him off so soon? So David's child, begot in adultery, must die for David's sin; and what had the poor child offended? Many first-born in Egypt, it is like, were not guilty of their father's cruelty towards Israel; and yet they must all go to it, they must die.

It may be, many a covetous, unconscionable wretch hath a son, that is more honest; and yet the ill-gotten estate moulders away, and comes to nothing, with an invisible canker. Is here justice to the children, to smart thus for their father's fault?

To this I answer, first, We are to consider children, as part of their parents; bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh. And is it not justice in God, to punish wicked parents in what part of themselves he pleaseth? It seems as lawful as for a king to punish a traitor in what part of his body,—head, or hand, or foot,—it seems best to him. If Jero-



boam's hand wither for the sin of his whole person, is it not just with God? And is it not a penalty upon the whole person? And, upon this account, it was not unjust with God, when David had sinned in numbering the people,—to smite seventy thousand of the people; if you consider David as a general father to all the people; they part of him, as he was king, as being part of his kingdom.

And such an answer, if I had not other to give, should I give to an Anabaptist, that asks me, Why I baptize my child? I should answer, 'He is part of myself; and so it is fit he be baptized, because I am: otherwise, all of myself is not baptized.' And this gives some reason of what the apostle saith, that "the child of a believing father or mother is holy, that is, is a Christian, for the believing parent's sake;" because he is part of that parent.

Secondly, There are some punishments, that descend, as I may say, naturally from parents to children: nay, I may say, some sins, that descend so naturally, that God should invert the very course of nature, if they stuck not to the children. Original sin and guilt we derive, not from our immediate parents, but from our first parent Adam: but some actual sins many children derive from their parents. When parents from their children's infancy let them run into lewd courses; and either give them example of such courses, or at least reprove and restrain them not; the children grow lewd and wicked. Whose sin is that lewdness? It is the child's: but it is the parent's also. And many a parent sees the just punishment of his own fault upon himself in the miscarriage of his child, his coming to fearful wickedness, and very oft to a fearful end. Eli's lenity to his wretched sons, in not restraining them, and so David's to Adonijah,—did traduce and derive that sinful miscarriage into them. And God even visited that sin of the parents upon the children, in suffering them to grow so abominably sinful.

Many a parent is guilty of this, and yet little considers it. When their children prove debauched, wild, riotous,—they, it may be, will fret to see their expensive and destructive courses. But let them reflect upon themselves, and consider, whether their children derive not that wickedness either from their example, or want of care for their Christian education. Is it any injustice in God, when parents will have their children so brought up in wickedness, to let them



be wicked? any injustice either to parents or children, that it is so, when children will be so wicked, and parents will let them be so?

So some punishments descend naturally from the sin of the parent: as when children are made beggars by the riot, prodigal, lewd, courses of the parents; when a whoring, lewd parent gets the foul disease, and so traduceth it to his children; when an unconscionable getter of an estate leaves it to his children, that, like a leprosy, a canker, and a curse, sticks to it; and it cannot but rot and come to nothing. What should the justice of God do in this case? Bless a cursed estate; preserve children, that the parents will infect; and keep them from beggary, whom parents will make beggars? Shall God work miracles for these, that only work rebellion? and change the very course of the nature of things for them, that will not change one lust?

Thirdly, We are to distinguish between punishments and trials. A good son of a bad father, may come into affliction because of his father's sin: and yet that laid upon him not directly as a punishment, but trial. A good child of a prodigal, riotous, or unconscionable father, may come to poverty, when God aims it not as a judgment on him for his father's sin, but for trial, and admonition to him against such sins. The father, indeed, is so punished, when his child comes to misery: but the affliction, in the mean time, is to the child for his good. The cutting-off of Jeroboam's son was a sad judgment to Jeroboam; because the only hopeful child he had, was so taken away; but it was not intended as a punishment to his child, but in mercy, to take him away from wrath to come: as in Isa. lvii. 1, "The righteous are taken away from the evil to come."

Fourthly, and lastly, The proper meaning is, God visits upon evil children the sins of their fathers unto the third and fourth generation.

This leaves a lesson to parents: That they would pity their children; and when they sin, think of them; and of the misery they entail upon them.



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

EXODUS, XX. 11.

*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore, the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.*

THE greatest obscurity we have to speak about, is in the last clause, "He hallowed it:" and yet, at first sight, that seems least obscure of all. The two former clauses may rather, one would think, set us at a stand; and yet, the great dispute is about the last,—viz. in regard of that sabbath we now celebrate. When we look upon the world, it may set us at a wonder, that this vast bulk of all things should be made in six days. Heaven, and earth, and seas, in six days? How many houses in the world have cost the work of six years? Solomon was building the temple seven years, and his own house twenty years: and this great universe, and all things in it, to be built in six days?

And yet, if we look at the power of him that made it, we have as much cause to wonder, that he should be six days about it. He that made all things by his word, could have done it in one moment as well as six days, and with one word as well as six. And he that made all things of nothing, could also have made all things in no length of time, but in an instant, in a 'moment' of time, in the 'twinkling of an eye,' as he will change all things, 1 Cor. xv. 52.

And so, concerning his resting; if he were weary with working, that he needed resting, why did he work, till he was weary? And if he were not weary, why had he need to rest?

Such frivolous, impious, and atheistical disputes, may flesh, and blood, and carnal reason, move, about the actings of God, that hath not learned to resolve all his wonderful actings into these two great principles,—his power and will. That he created all things of nothing with the word of his mouth, is no scruple, if we resolve it into his power: and that he took

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1320.



six days to do it, who could have done it in a moment, is as little, if we resolve it into his will. That he was not weary with doing so great a work, it is no scruple, if we resolve it into his power: and that he rested, though he were not weary, is as little, if we resolve it into his will.

And, therefore, how can we better begin our discourse about the matter we are upon,—viz. his creating all things by his word, and yet taking six days to do it: and his not being weary with so great a work, and yet resting, though he were not weary,—than by adoration of his power and will? And, therefore, as David, for all his haste of fleeing from Absalom, yet, when he came to the top of the mount Olivet, he worshipped God, 2 Sam. xv. 32; so, let us make so much a stop in the current of our discourse, as to give the Lord his due of his power and pleasure, before we go farther. And that let us do in the words,—and oh! that we might ever do it in the devotion,—of the four-and-twenty elders, Rev. iv. 11; “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

All Israel hears more divinity and philosophy in these few words, “In six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day,” &c, than all the great wisdom and philosophy of the heathen was able to spell out in a thousand years. Some of them were so wide from knowing that the world was made by God, that they thought it was never made at all, but was eternal, and never had beginning. Others, that it was a god itself, and made itself. Others, that it grew together at hap-hazard of atoms, or motes flying up and down, which, at last, met and conjoined in this fabric of the world, which we behold. So blind is sinful man to the knowledge of his Creator, if he have no better eyes and light to look after him by, than his own. Israel hath a divine light here held out before them, whereby they see and learn in these few words, “That the world was not eternal, but had a beginning; and that it was made; and that it made not itself, but was made by God; that it was not jumbled together by hap-hazard of I know not ‘what,’ and I know not ‘how,’ but that ‘God made it in six days.’”

That which God speaks so short here, Moses afterward, when he set pen to paper to write his books, enlarges upon; and tells you, in the beginning of Genesis, in what manner



God proceeded in this great work, and what he created every day. With that, you see, the Bible begins the story of the creation; the proper foundation, that every scholar should lay of his learning there,—namely, to know his Creator: and to know “of whom, and through whom, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen,” as the apostle devoutly, Rom. xi. 36.

Let us consider the two things severally, That God made heaven and earth; and, secondly, That he made them in six days.

I. When I look up to heaven, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou hast ordained, “I say (saith David), What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?” We may also say, upon such a prospect, “Oh! what is God, what a divine and infinite power, and wisdom, and glory, that made so great, so beautiful, so stately, a fabric!”—‘Our God made the heavens,’ is the Israelites’ plea against the gods of the heathen, pitiful pieces of wood and stone, that could neither see, nor hear, nor smell, nor stir; but ‘our God made the heavens.’—There is a passage very remarkable, Jer. x. 11; “Thus shall ye say to them, The gods, that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.” That verse is in the Chaldee tongue; whereas every clause of his book besides is Hebrew, and not a syllable of Chaldee in it. And what is the reason? The people were, ere long, to be captived into Chaldea; and when they came there, the Chaldees would be ready to be persuading them to worship their gods. Poor Israel, new come thither, could not speak their language, nor dispute the case with them in their own tongue. Therefore, the Lord, by the prophet, puts so much Chaldee into their mouths, as to make a profession of their own God, and to deride and curse the others. “Your gods made not heaven and earth; and, therefore, shall perish from the earth, and be confounded; but ‘our God made the heavens.’”

Oh! what an excellent study is it, to study God as the great maker of earth and heaven, to look seriously upon this great fabric, the variety, order, beauty, of the creatures; and deeply to think, what kind of a thing is God, that made all these things with the word of his mouth. How great, dreadful, terrible, is the Creator, with whom we have to do! Study



upon the first verse of Genesis, "God created the heavens and the earth." And can you find it otherwise there, than that he did that in a moment; that in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, he made these two parts of the world, centre and circumference; spread out this great canopy over us like a curtain, and hung this vast ball, upon which we tread, upon nothing; both at once, and both in a moment? Oh! what an amazing power is here to think of! Oh! what a God have we to deal withal! How can this God crush a sinner, check the pride and presumption of wicked dust and ashes, when he can do such wondrous and incomprehensible things as these? How can this God create comforts to a poor afflicted child of his own? How can he find out means to deliver and relieve a poor distressed saint, that puts his trust in him,—when, with a word, he can make a world; nay, if he had pleased, could have made a thousand?

Such use and other, might we make of the study of our Creator, and his creating. And, oh! that he that created us, and all things, would create in us frequent, solid, meditations of him, and of his mighty power and working, whereby he made all things of nothing.

It was once questioned by one, 'What did God before he made the world?' And answered by another, 'He created hell for curious and impertinent inquirers.' It was once asked by another, "With what instruments, tools, and engines, did God make the world, if he made it?" His own Spirit gives answer to this, "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made," &c. But we may not, unusefully and unchristianly, move this question, 'Wherefore was it, that God made the world?' The Scripture answers this too, Prov. xvi. 4: "The Lord hath made all things for himself."—Rev. iv. 11; "For thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are, and were, created." But this leaves us to our inquiring still:—viz. in what sense to understand his 'making all things for himself,' and what his will and pleasure aimed at? Did God create creatures, because he had need of creatures? Did he make the heavens, because he wanted a house for himself? and the earth, because he could not be without tenants in those tenements below?

And the nail of this question might be driven farther: Why did he make this world, seeing he will mar it in time, and bring it to desolation? Why made he millions of men, whose



end proves to be damned for ever? Had it not been as good, this house of the universe had never been; as to be built, and to be fired, and burnt down again? Had it not been better for millions, that they had never been born, than to be born, and brought into the world for a little time, and then to be damned to eternity?

‘But, O vain man, who art thou that disputest against God?’ Shall the pot or vessel say to him that made it, Why madest thou me thus, or why at all?—For his will and pleasure were all things made: and, it is not fit to dispute his will or pleasure, that could make all things. But that we may receive satisfaction in this point, and that we may not be ignorant of so great a matter, as the reason why God made the world,—

First, We may resolve it without any sticking, that he, that created all things, stood in need of nothing; and he that gave being to all, needed not any thing from the creature to amend his own well-being. That is a most just challenge of all the world, if it can, to show that God is beholden to any, or had ever need of any: the apostle makes it, Rom. xi. 35, 36: “Who hath been the Lord’s counsellor to teach him, or who hath first given to him,” &c. But,

Secondly, We may give him that for a proper and direct reason of God’s creating all things, which the apostle says, Rom. ix. 23; “that he might make known the riches of his glory:”—viz. that he might glorify himself, and that he might impart of his own riches to his creature.

It might almost be questioned, whether God could choose but create the world: not to put a necessity, or compulsion upon God, who doth freely whatever he doth, and hath no other tie upon him for his actings than his own will. But in regard of that infinite goodness that is in God, could that do other than flow out upon the creature? God, from all eternity, dwelt in and with himself,—blessed, ever blessed, in the enjoyment of himself, and needed nothing beside himself. But could that infinite ocean of goodness, that was in him, be kept within those bounds of self-enjoyment, and not communicate itself to the creature? A lively, full, flowing, fountain cannot contain its ever-flowing waters within its own brims; but it must flow out to refresh and water the places that are about it. The sun cannot keep its light and heat within itself; but must impart it to the world.



We shall not impose any such necessity upon God, as he hath done upon these creatures. And yet, if we should say, 'God, the everlasting fountain of being, of goodness, could not but impart being and his goodness to creatures;' this would speak no imperfection in God, but his infinite perfection. But we will take the thing up in terms of Scripture. He was willing to make known his goodness; it was his pleasure to create the world, that he might communicate the riches of his glory. God would give being to creatures, that he might glorify his own being; would communicate of his goodness to his creatures, that he might glorify his own goodness. So all terminates and centres in that great end,—his own glory. He created the world, to glorify his power: gave being to creatures, that he might glorify his own being; shows goodness to them, that he may glorify his own goodness, and receive glorifying from them: and, at last, will destroy the world, to glorify his power and justice; damn the wicked, to glorify his truth and justice; and glorify his saints, to glorify his grace. So that God made all things for himself, that is, for his own glory: doth all things for his own glory; created thee, me, and all flesh, that he might reap glory from us.

II. But let us consider of the second thing, as it tends to the end of this command, the setting-forth the reason of the institution of the sabbath; that he created all things "in six days."

And what needed he take six days, that could have done all in a moment? He had as little need to take time for his work, as he had of the world, he being Lord of all. What reason can we give? but that he, by his own proceeding and acting, would set the clock of time, and measure out days, and a week, by which all time is measured,—by his own standard, evening and morning, to make a natural day, i. e. day and night: and seven natural days to make a week; six days of labour, the seventh for rest; six for the man, the seventh for God.

Shall we trace the story of the six days a little, that we may the more plainly observe the rest and blessing of the sabbath, when it came?

That the world was made at equinox, all grant,—but differ at which, whether about the eleventh of March, or twelfth of September; to me in September, without all doubt. All



things were created in their ripeness and maturity : apples ripe, and ready to eat, as is too sadly plain in Adam and Eve's eating the forbidden fruit. To this we might add, that God attributed the beginning of the year to March, upon ecclesiastical account, upon their coming out of Egypt, Exod. xii : which argues it had begun from some time else before. And so the Jews well observe, that ראש השנה לשנים "The beginning of the year, for telling the year, is from September: ראש השנה לרגלים The beginning of the year, for stating of the feasts, is from March [see Exod. xxiii.16]: the feast of in-gathering in the end of the year." After which, a new year was presently to begin, when they had gathered-in grapes, &c.

So that look at the first day of the creation, God made heaven and earth in a moment. The heaven, as soon as created, moved, and the wheel of time began to go : and thus, for twelve hours, there was universal darkness. This is called the 'evening,' meaning night. Then God said, "Let there be light;" and light arose in the east, and, in twelve hours more, was carried over the hemisphere : and this is called, 'morning,' or 'day.' And the evening and morning made the first natural day ; twelve hours, darkness, —and twelve, light.

Accordingly did God proceed in the works of the six days, as Moses hath informed us at large ; which I shall not insist upon, but come to the works of the sixth day. On that day, God created creeping things, and beasts, and, lastly, man. And that which is needful to observe, towards the Lord's resting, and sanctifying the seventh day, is, that before the seventh day came, sin was come into the world, and Christ was promised.

On the sixth day, all was marred again. Before that day was ended, sin was got into the world, and spoiled the best of the creation of God, men, and some angels. This we have to speak to, which giveth some illustration concerning the institution of the sabbath of the seventh day.

That Adam fell on the very day that he was created, needs not so much dispute about, for it is easy to be proved, —as it needs sorrow and wonder : *wonder*, that he, placed in so incomparable happiness, and having perfect power to continue in it, should set so light by that happiness, as to pass it off for an apple ; and that he should lose that happiness on



his first day, when he was able to have kept it all his days; and sorrow, that the noblest of natures, that God had created, should be so soon overthrown, and overthrown so sorely.

For proof of this, we may have recourse to Scripture, to reason, and to the correspondence, that was betwixt the fall and the redemption.

I. To prove it by Scripture:—

First, Observe that, Psal. xlix. 12: “Nevertheless, man, being in honour, abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish.” The Psalmist, in the verse before, shows the carnal confidence of worldly men: “Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations,” &c. And in this verse he shows, how vain such confidences are. For that man hath no abiding here in his ‘house,’ or ‘honour,’ but he must away. And he lays it down, not only as a thing undoubted in itself, in the words that you have before you in your English Bibles; but, in the original, he includes the most proof of it, that could be produced. For, in the original, the words speak literally thus; “Adam in honour lodged not all night,” but was flitted out of his honour before his first night came. And if it were so with him in his great honour, and in his great ability, to have stood and remained in his honour,—it is much more so with man, that is become sinful, mortal, and nothing but fading. I say, the words, in the original, bear also this sense, that “Adam in honour lodged not all night.” And so they speak and prove the thing we are upon, that he fell and faded on the very day he was created; and lost his honour and happiness, before night came.

Secondly, Observe that, John viii. 44: “He was a murderer from the beginning.” The Syriac renders it, “*from in the beginning;*” the common phrase, whereby the Jewish nation expressed the ‘days of creation.’ So is it their common expression, whereby they denote the works of the creation, to call them *מעשי בראשית* ‘the works in the beginning.’ And the Jews, that stood by, and heard Christ speak these words, “He was a murderer from the beginning,”—could not otherwise understand it, than that he was a murderer even from the days of the creation; that he murdered Adam on the very day that he was created. And so Christ meant in the words, as speaking according to the common and familiar language of the nation. For,



II. To clear this by reason, which the Scripture thus hinteth:—

First, It is without all question, that the devil would slack no time ; but, as he was fallen himself through his spite and malice at the happiness and honour of Adam ; so he would hasten all he could, to bring him out of his happiness and honour, which he so much spited and maliced.

It is disputed, what day the angels were created. It is the most probable, they were created the first day, with the heavens ; and that they were spectators of God's works in the creation, and praised and magnified the Lord for his works all along. So God himself, the great Creator, tells us, Job xxxviii. 4—7 ; “Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth, &c. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest,—or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the corner-stone thereof? when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” By ‘stars,’ and ‘sons of God,’ is plainly meant the ‘angels :’ and they are singing and shouting, when God lays the foundations of the earth ; as they did at the laying the foundation of the temple, Ezra iii. Now, the foundation of the earth was laid in the first day, the first work of the creation ; when God, in one and the same instant, created heaven and earth ; and, in the same instant, created the angels with the heavens.

Now, these angels that fell, were not fallen, doubtless, before man was made. For, upon creating of man, who was the last of the creation, it is said, Gen. i. 31, “And God saw every thing, that he had made, and, behold, it was very good :” and there was yet nothing bad or evil in the world,—no angels fallen, no sin at all. But when those that fell, saw the dignity, and honour, and happiness, that God had placed man in, a piece of clay, a lump of earth, dust of the ground ; and that he put all creatures under his feet, as it is, Psal. viii. 5, 6 ; yea, and gave angels charge to attend him, as it is, Psal. xci. 11 ;—they maliced this happiness and honour, and scorned this service and attendance ; and damned themselves merely upon this spite at man.

Would they, therefore, think you, delay any time of tempting man, to try whether they could shake him out of his happiness and honour, and bring him into the same condemnation with themselves? No ; the devil never since



slacked time, and put off any opportunities of doing mischief; much less would he then, when he had mischieved himself with such a spleen.

Secondly, I might speak of divers things. As that, if Adam had kept the sabbath in innocency, he had kept the law; that if he had continued any time without sin, he had begot Cain without sin: if Eve had been a little practised in obedience, she had not so soon been shaken, when she came to be tried: that their speech showeth, that no fruit had been eaten before. But that which is especially considerable, is, that the redemption was to be showed instantly upon the creation. Since Christ was to be set up Lord of all, the Saviour of all that are saved, and the second Adam, repairer of the ruins of the first; it was not only fit, but indeed needful, that he should be proclaimed King and Saviour even the first day of man.

I do not say, it was needful that Adam should fall on his first day, that Christ might be proclaimed on his first day: and yet I say, it was needful that Christ should be proclaimed that day,—viz. that he might be set up Lord of all men, from the first day of man: but especially, that what stability or firmness there is in obedience and holiness, it might be founded in Christ alone. I could almost say, it was needful, that Adam should fall on the day of his creation, not in regard of any necessity God put upon him, but in regard of the fickleness of created nature, being left to itself. When I say, ‘it was almost needful,’—I mean almost inevitable, but that he, left entirely to himself and to his own strength, should stand the temptation of an angel, a creature so far above him by nature, and so far wiser than he, though he were full of wisdom. And, you see, Satan did not so much tempt his strength, as his wisdom; and there he overturns him, by a trick of subtilty, outwitting his wisdom.

However, it was fit the Redeemer should be held forth, even the first day of man, as “the heir of all things,” Heb. i. 2,—as the root of all to be saved, and the sure foundation of all holiness, grace, and eternal life. And,

III. Do but observe, what correspondence there is betwixt the fall and redemption; and the latter will speak the former to have been on Adam’s first day. Redemption was wrought on the sixth day, as the fall had been on the sixth day. And when Christ had wrought that great work, he



rested the seventh day in his grave; as God rested on the seventh day, when he had wrought the great work of creation. To this purpose, I might also apply the particular times of the one, and the other. About the third hour, the hour afterward of sacrifice and prayer, it is very probable Adam was created. And Mark tells you, chap. xv. 25, "And it was the third hour, when they crucified him;" that is, when they delivered him up to Pilate to be crucified. About the sixth hour, or high noon, Adam most probably fell, as that being the time of eating. And John tells you, chap. xix. 14, that, about the sixth hour, he was condemned, and led away to be crucified. And, about the ninth hour, or three o'clock afternoon, Christ was promised, which Moses calls the cool of the day: and, about the ninth hour, Christ "cried out with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost." Such harmony may be found betwixt the day and hours, of the one and of the other: the latter helping to prove and clear, that Adam fell on the sixth day, the day on which he was created,—and "continued not in honour all night."

Ah! what a glassy, brittle, thing is poor human nature, when it is so shaken all to pieces from so great perfection, that it holds not whole above three hours, or thereabouts! And that it held whole so long, was, because it had not yet met with a temptation. And that Satan offered not a temptation all that while, was, because he would hold off, till they came to their time of eating; and their first meal proves their poison. But, ah! the glorious and divine power of the grace of the Lord Jesus, that enables a poor sinful soul to hold out against the shocks of all the temptation of hell, and to break through all, and to get to glory. Compare Adam shaken with the first temptation the devil offers, with Job, not shaken with all the devil could do; and "to the praise of the glory of his grace," as it is said, Eph. i. 6: we have cause to cry out all our lives,—and so do saints in glory, to eternity,—"Great is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Now, read the words, carrying this that hath been spoken in your minds; "In six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore, God blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it." And on the sixth day Adam fell, and Christ was promised; and "on the seventh day, God rested, and blessed the sabbath-day," &c. And so the Chaldee translator of the



Psalms, considers of the thing. For upon Psal. xcii, which is entitled "for the sabbath-day," he saith thus; "A psalm or song, which Adam, the first man, sang concerning the sabbath-day." And the same Chaldee translator on Cant. i, yet more plainly; "When Adam saw, that his sin was forgiven, when the sabbath came, he sang a psalm; as it is said, 'a psalm or song for the sabbath-day.'"

And now, looking on this first week of the world, in this prospect,—viz. as sin come into the world, and Christ promised before the seventh day came, it will give us a clearer prospect of the sabbath, and of God's resting,—viz.

I. That God had created a new creation, before he rested on the sabbath. For when Adam and mankind, by his fall, was shattered all to pieces; and the noblest creature, to whom God put all other creatures in subjection, was himself become like the beasts that perish, the beasts that were put in subjection to him; and when Satan, the enemy of God, as well as man, had thus broke, all to pieces, the chief workmanship of God; here the world was marred, as soon as made. And as God "in six days made heaven and earth, and all things therein,"—so, before the sixth day went out, Satan had marred and destroyed him, for whom all these things were created.

God, therefore, coming in with the promise of Christ, who should destroy Satan, that had destroyed all; and having now created a new world of grace, and brought in a second Adam, the root of all that were to be saved; and having restored Adam, not only from his lost condition, but into a better condition, than he was in before, as having engrafted him and all believers into Christ,—a surer foundation than natural perfection, which he had by creation, but had now lost:—then he rested, as having wrought a greater work, than the creation of nature.

But then you will say, That that first sabbath was of evangelical institution, not of moral: that then the law for keeping of it was not written in Adam's heart, but was of evangelical revelation.

I may answer truly, That it was both.—For though Adam had not sinned, yet must he have kept the sabbath. And to this purpose it is observable, that the institution of the sabbath is mentioned, Gen. ii, before the fall of Adam is mentioned, Gen. iii; partly, because the Holy Ghost would



mention all the seven days of the first week together,—and partly, to intimate to us, that even in innocency there must have been a sabbath kept; a sabbath kept, if Adam had continued in innocency: and in that regard the law of it to him was moral, and written in his heart, as all the laws of piety towards God were. It is said, Gen. ii. 16, “The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress and keep it.” Now, if Adam had continued in innocency, do you think he must have been at work, dressing and keeping the garden on the sabbath-day, as on the other six? He had God’s own copy so laid before him, of working six days, and resting the seventh, that he could not but see, that it was laid before him for his example.

But you will say,—‘All the moral law was written in Adam’s heart, as soon as he was created: now, the law to keep the sabbath could not be, because the sabbath was not yet created, nor come. And by then the sabbath came, the law in his heart was blurred by sin and his fall.’—

I answer, The law, writ in Adam’s heart, was not particularly every command of the two tables, written as they were in two tables, line by line; but this law in general, of piety and love towards God, and of justice and love towards our neighbour. And in these lay couched a law to all particulars, that concerned either; to branch forth, as occasion for the practice of them should arise. As in our natural corruption, brought in by sin, there is couched every sin whatsoever too ready to bud forth, when occasion is offered,—so, in the law in his heart, of piety towards God, was comprehended the practice of every thing, that concerned love and piety towards God, as occasion for the practice was offered. Under this law was couched a tie and law to obey God in every thing he should command. And so, though the command, “Eat not of the forbidden fruit,” was a positive, and not a moral command; yet was Adam bound to the obedience of it by virtue of the moral law, written in his heart, which tied him to love God, and to obey him in every thing he should command.

And so the sabbath, when it came, although you look upon it as a positive command in its institution; yet was it writ also in Adam’s heart, to obey God in that command, especially when God had set him such a copy by his own resting.



II. A second thing observable in that first sabbath, and which was transmitted to posterity as a law to keep, is, that now it had several ends. As in man there is something of the perfection of every creature,—a spirit, as angels; life, as beasts; growth, as trees; a body, as stones;—so the sabbath hath something of the excellency and of the end, of every law, that was, or could be, given.

There are four sorts of laws, which God hath given to men; moral,—commemorative,—evangelical,—and typical. Moral laws are given in the ten commandments:—commemorative laws, as the law of the Passover, to commemorate the delivery out of Egypt; Pentecost, to commemorate the giving of the law:—typical, as sacrifices, priesthood, purifications, sprinkling of blood, to signify “good things to come,” as the apostle speaks, and to have their accomplishing in Christ:—evangelical, such as repentance, self-denial, believing, &c.

Now, the sabbath is partaker of all these ends together, and hath the several excellences of all these ends included in itself. And so had that first sabbath, appointed to Adam.

First, The moral end is to rest from labours. So in this fourth commandment; “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt do no manner of work,” &c. So Jer. xvii. 21: “Thus saith the Lord, Take heed to yourselves, to bear no burden on the sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. Neither bring forth a burden out of your houses, neither do you any work; but hallow the sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers.”

“Oh! then I celebrate the sabbath (saith the sabbath-breaker); for I do no work, but play and recreate, and drink, and sit still, and do no work at all.” Friend, dost thou think God ever established idleness and folly by a law? That he hallowed the sabbath-day to be a playing, fooling, sporting day? But, Christian, how readest thou, as a Christian? “The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God;” not a sabbath for thy lust and laziness. And “in it thou shalt do no manner of work” of thine own, but the work of the Lord thy God. And the rest, that he hath commanded, is not for idleness, but for piety towards God; for which end he gave all the laws of the first table,—viz. to leave communion with the world and worldly things that day, and



to have it with God ; as in Isa. lviii. 13, 14, “ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy will on my holy days, and call the sabbath a delight.” As Moses, to betake ourselves to the mount of God, and there to have communion with him : to get into the mount above the world, and there to meet God and converse with him : “ to be in the Spirit on the Lord’s day ;” and not to recreate the body, but the soul. To gather spiritual strength for that, which, it may be, hath been scattered in our worldly employment.

Secondly, There is a commemorative end of the sabbath, to remember God’s creating the world. Which Adam might very well, nay, must, have been employed about, though he had never fallen. When he had been, all the week, upon his employment, dressing the garden, and keeping it ; then, on the sabbath, to set himself to meditate upon God’s creating of the world ; and to study his power, and wisdom, and goodness, showed in that glorious workmanship, and to spend the day in prayers to him. Observe the work of that day to us, and the same it should have been to him, in Psal. xcii, which is entitled ‘ a psalm for the sabbath-day.’ It tells you, what the work of the day is ; ver. 1, “ It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High.” And upon what reason, ver. 4 ; “ For thou hast made me glad through thy works ; I will triumph in the works of thy hands.” This is a sabbath-day’s work ; after our six days’ work, to make it our employment to think of God’s : to meditate of his wondrous works of creation and preservation : and there will come in the thoughts of our Creator and Preserver, and may mind us of our engagement to praise him ; to whet our thankfulness and faith with these thoughts.

1. When we have laboured all the week, to think of our Creator, that hath sustained us, fed, clothed, brought us hitherto. And here is a right sabbath employment, to let our thoughts stream from our worldly employment to God, and to the remembrance of him in whom “ we live, and move, and have our being.”

2. To trust God with our support, though we labour not on the sabbath, but spend it wholly to him, and not to ourselves. He that created all things, and that hath fed and preserved us hitherto, can support us without our working



on his day; nay, and will do it: for do his work, and, undoubtedly, thou shalt not want thy wages.

What a lecture did God read in his raining of manna, that, on the sabbath-day, he rained none: thereby to show his own owning of his sabbath, and checking and chiding those, that, for greediness and distrust, would go out and think to gather some, on that day. And when he provided them manna on the sixth day for the sabbath also, what a lecture did he read,—that he, that observes the sabbath, and does God's will, ceasing from his own labour, and doing his, shall never be unprovided for.

Thirdly, There is an evangelical end of the sabbath, referring to Christ: and that in Adam's sabbath as well as ours. Let us begin with his.

I have showed, that, on the sixth day, Adam sinned, and Christ was promised. So that the last work of God in the days of creation, was the setting-up Christ, and restoring fallen man by him. And here God rested,—viz. he had brought in his Son, in whom his soul delighted, and made him heir of all things: and thus he rested in Christ,—finished his work in Christ,—rested, refreshed, delighted himself in Christ. Now, the next day, when the sabbath came in, what had Adam to do in it, but to remember the creation, to remember his new creating, when he was broke all to pieces and spoiled,—to remember his Creator and Redeemer?

It is said, Gen. iii. 21, “Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” The lord and lady of all the world clad in leather! Which our silks and satins now would scorn to think of: but, from so mean a garb, comes all our gallantry, though now we scorn it. But whence came those skins? Most probably, they were the skins of beasts, that were sacrificed. For, that sacrifice was from the beginning, may be observed from that, that Christ is called, “The Lamb slain from the beginning of the world:” and that, not only in prediction, or that it was determined and foretold by God, that he should be slain; but in figure, that sacrifice was offered from the beginning of the world, which did presignify his killing and offering-up. And this farther appears from the sacrifices of Cain and Abel; which rite and piece of religion, they had learned of their father Adam.

Here, then, was work for Adam on the sabbath, to sacrifice



in memory of Christ, to be offered up for redemption: and to praise God for creating the world; but, especially, for vouchsafing Christ, whereby a better world and estate is created.

And would not Adam, when he had a family, preach to his family of these things upon the sabbath-day? “My children, learn to know and remember the Creator, the blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—who, in six days, made heaven and earth; and, on the sixth day, made me and your mother, both of us, in his own image, perfectly holy and righteous, and endued with power of perfect obedience, and to resist all temptations. But that day we were deceived by the devil, and fell and undid ourselves and our posterity, and came into a state of death and damnation. But God suffered us to lie so but a few hours; but promised his own Son to take our flesh, and to die to deliver us from death and damnation: and taught us this duty of sacrifice in commemoration of Christ’s death, and appointed this day to commemorate these things, and to be employed in such service and meditations. Oh! my children, learn to know your Creator, to believe in Christ your Redeemer, and to observe his sabbath.” Such employment as this, had Adam with his family on the sabbath-day: that it was even a Christian sabbath to him, as ours is to us: and the very same work is ours, and was his, on the sabbath-day; but only that he also sacrificed.

Fourthly, There is a typical end of the sabbath; to signify eternal rest.—Heb. iv. 3; “For we, which have believed, do enter into rest: as he said, I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” Where the apostle signifies, that the sabbath hinted another rest, to wit, God’s eternal rest, different from that rest, when God ceased from the works of creation. The sabbath typifies the end,—viz. eternal rest: and the means,—viz. to rest in Christ. One end was to Adam in innocency,—both, to us. This is a lecture, that may be read in the sabbath; in something that is visible to see something invisible,—as, in the water, to see the sun. This is a way to rest, and resembles that great and last rest: as pleasant walks lead, at length, to the stately house at the end of them.

This is a fit thought for the sabbath-day morning:—



“Now I rest from the world; how shall I rest from it eternally? Now I deal with God invisibly, but one day visibly.”—They who love eternal rest, will certainly love the sabbath.

To all these ends, God added another end, as the sabbath was given to his peculiar people, given at Sinai, with all these ends, and this more;—viz. to distinguish the Jews from all others for God’s own people. See Deut. v. 15: “And remember, that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.” And so in Exod. xxiii. 12. And the sabbath is reckoned with the Jewish festivals, Col. ii. 16; “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days.” They were distinguished by times from all other people. But how is this sabbath distinctive? I answer,

1. None in the world kept the like resting day. Therefore, the Jews were scoffed at by other nations, as idle, and taken advantage of on that day.

2. They kept this rest as a redeemed people, Deut. v. How had they toiled in Egypt, and had not the liberty of a sabbath! Now, on the contrary, when they were delivered out of Egypt, they kept the sabbath, as a signification of their rest from their labours there.

And now, look on the sabbath, in its moral, commemorative, evangelical, typical, and ceremonial, end. Look on it, in its royal dress, with what possible it can put on, as queen Esther was dressed; and then view its beauty.

First, In its antiquity.—It was from the beginning: as it is said of the word of God, 1 John i. 1. Ask after the ancient paths; and the sabbath will be found to be one of them. This is not of the law, but of the fathers. It is the first-born of ordinances, and hath a double portion of honour due to it. It was the first day of comfort in the world, after Adam was adjudged to toil and misery. The Jews say of it, ‘That it is a mediator.’

The consideration of these ends of the sabbath, may serve to assoil that controversy about the antiquity of its institution;—viz. Whether its institution was not before the giving of the law? In the dispute about the sabbath, a-foot



in England some years ago, there were some went so high (shall I say ?) or so low, as to maintain, that our sabbath was not of divine institution, but ecclesiastical only; not ordained by God, but the church. And to make good this assertion, they would persuade you, that there was no sabbath instituted before the giving of the law. None from the beginning, but that the world was two thousand five hundred and thirteen years without a sabbath: for so long it was from the creation to Israel's going out of Egypt: and that then, and not before, was the law for the sabbath given.

Then I pray, why should Moses speak of God's sanctifying the sabbath, when he is speaking of the first week of the world,—if he meant not, that the seventh day of that week was sanctified? And what sense were it to read the command thus, “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, &c, and rested the seventh; therefore, two thousand five hundred and thirteen years after, he blessed the seventh day and hallowed it?” But read it, as it lies before you, “He rested the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it;”—and must it not needs mean, he blessed that seventh day, that he rested, and sanctified it, and so the seventh successively in following generations?

But you may observe in Moses, that the sabbath is given upon two reasons or accounts: here, because God *rested*; but, in Deut. v. 15, because God *delivered* them out of Egypt. “Thou, O Israel, thou must keep the sabbath-day in remembrance of thy deliverance out of Egypt.” But withal he bids them, “Remember to keep the sabbath,” in memory of God's resting. Therefore, certainly the sabbath was kept in remembrance of that, before it was given to Israel, to keep in memory of the deliverance out of Egypt.

I said, Adam should have kept the sabbath, had he continued in innocency: then, certainly, he had more need of a sabbath, for the benefit of his soul, when he was become a sinner. And those four ends of the sabbath already mentioned, were also ends of the sabbath to him, as well as to us. The beauty, then, of the sabbath, consists,

First, In its antiquity.

Secondly, In the universality of its reception, throughout all ages. One generation left it to another, from father to son: and it is known to all churches.

Thirdly, The bravery of its institution. It had God's



example: God hallowed, blessed, dressed it nobly: but his example is an addition without parallel.

Fourthly, The nobleness of its nature.

1. In it there was something of every part of the law. It was moral, typical, ceremonial. As there is something in man of all the creatures,—so there is something in the sabbath of all the law.

2. By it is the propagation of religion. See Isa. lxvi. 23: “And it shall come to pass, that, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.”—As Psal. xix. 2: “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge,”—so, from sabbath to sabbath, God is spoken of, and knowledge of divine things revealed. This was the market-day, that still furnished the Jews with what was needful for their spiritual food and sustenance. All marketing was forbidden on it, Neh. xiii. 15, &c, because a greater market was to be minded. So manna was not rained on that day, because better things were rained.

3. By it, came benefit to man and beast. It gave them rest from labour, and renewed their strength.

Fifthly, Its durableness. Exod. xxxi. 16, 17: “The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me, and the children of Israel for ever.” It reacheth, as the cherubims’ wings, from one end of the world unto the other.

Hence, also, we may see, what little difference there is betwixt our sabbath and the first sabbath of the world. Both commemorate the creation, both the redemption: but only that ours is removed one day forward: the sabbath of old, on the seventh day of the week,—ours, on the first.

Much dispute hath been about this change; into which I will not ravel,—only observe these things in reference to this, that it is changed to the day of Christ’s resurrection.

I. As great a change as this do we not read in the Old Testament?—viz. the change of the beginning of the year from September to March, Exod. xii. 2. The year had a natural interest to begin in September, because then the world, the year, and time, began: and yet, when God wrought for Israel an extraordinary work in redeeming them from Egypt,



a figure of our redemption by Christ,—he thought good to change the year from that time, that naturally it did begin.

So, though the Passover be appointed to be in that first month, that began the new year, and be called an everlasting ordinance, Exod. xii. 16,—yet, upon occasion, the Lord ordained it to be kept in the second month, Num. ix.

To this we may add, God's changing the very end and memorial of the sabbath to Israel themselves. 'Changing,' said I? or rather, 'adding' a new memorial, which it had not before. In Exod. xx, the memorial is to remember God's creating and resting: in Deut. v, where the ten commandments are repeated, it is in memorial of their redemption out of Egypt; not unclothed of its first end and memorial, but clothed upon. So, if Adam had continued innocent, he must have kept the sabbath; and then it had been to him, but the memorial of God's creating and resting. But when Christ and redemption by him was set up and come in, before the sabbath came in,—then it was clothed with another memorial,—viz. the remembrance of the redemption.

II. Christ had power and authority to change the sabbath: Mark ii. 28, "The Son of man is lord of the sabbath." He had power over all divine ordinances, Heb. iii. 5, 6; "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, &c: but Christ as a son over his own house." He is not a servant in the house, but a son, to dispose of the affairs of the house, as he sees good. He is greater than the temple; and so may order the affairs of the temple, as he saw good.

If a Jew question, Why he laid-by the ceremonies of Moses? The answer is ready,—Because he was greater than Moses, Lord of the house, in which Moses was but a servant. Nay, it was he, that appointed Moses those ceremonies, and he might unappoint them at his pleasure. That is observable, Acts vii. 38; "This is that Moses, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel, which spake to him at mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give us."—"With the angel?" who was that? It was Christ, the great 'angel of the covenant,' as he is called, Mal. iii. 1:—the 'angel of God's presence,' as he is called, Isaiah lxiii. 9.—Then, who spake with Moses at mount Sinai? It was Christ.—Who gave him the lively oracles, laws, testimonies, statutes? It was Christ.—And then might



Christ, that gave them, dispose of them, as seemed him good.

So that if a Jew question, Why Christ changed circumcision into baptism, the paschal lamb into bread and wine, the Jewish sabbath into the Christian sabbath; the answer is ready,—He was Lord of them, and might dispose of them: he set up circumcision, the Passover, the Jewish sabbath, and might take them down, and alter them, as he pleased.

III. Ye read once and again, in Scripture, of God's creating "a new world:" Isa. lxxv. 17; "Behold! I create new heavens and a new earth."—2 Pet. iii. 13; "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth."—Rev. xxi. 1; "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth."—Now, when was this done? The apostle tells us when,—viz. in his own time, 2 Cor. v. 17; "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."—The meaning of it is, God's creating a new estate of things under the gospel:—a new church, the Jews cast off, and the Gentiles taken in:—new ordinances in his church; ceremonious worship taken down, and spiritual set up:—new sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, instead of the circumcision and Passover:—a new command of love to one another:—a new covenant, a new and living way into the most holy;—a new creature; and, in a word, "all things become new."

Then, certainly, a new sabbath was fit for a new creation: lay these two places together, Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,"—and Isa. lxxv. 17, "Behold! I create new heavens and a new earth."—In fulness of time, God created new heavens and a new earth: and, as the first creation had the old sabbath,—so, was it not fit, the new creation should have a new sabbath? As our Saviour speaks, Matt. ix. 17, "New cloth must not be put into an old garment, nor new wine into old bottles; but new wine must be put into new vessels, and both are preserved;" so, in this case, a new manner of worship, new ordinances, new sacraments, to be committed to the old sabbath. This is improper: but a new sabbath must be for these, as well as they themselves are new. How pious would Christianity have looked, if it had worn a coat all new in other respects, but had had on the shirt, or piecing, of the old sabbath? And how unfit was it, to have tied Christians to the observation of the old sabbath of the Jews?



IV. The resurrection of Christ was the day of his birth, and beginning of his kingdom. Observe the quotation, Acts xiii. 23: "The promise, which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled to us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus: as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." When was the day, wherein Christ was begotten? In the day that God raised him from the dead.—That is strange: for as he was God, was he not begotten from eternity? and as he was man, was he not conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born three-and-thirty years and a half before his resurrection?—Yes; both most true; and yet that true too, that he was begotten from the day of his resurrection. And the apostle tells you how to understand it,—viz. "he was the first begotten and first-born from the dead:" begotten that day to the Gentiles and all the world, from thenceforward a Saviour to them; and by his resurrection, as the apostle saith, Rom. i. 4, "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead."

So, likewise, his resurrection was the beginning of his reign and kingdom. Consider upon that, Matt. xxvi. 29: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day, when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom:" that 'is, when I am risen from the dead.'—And see Matt. xxviii. 18; Now I begin to reign, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—For now he hath conquered all his enemies,—devil, death, and hell.

Now, was not the first day of the week,—the day on which Christ rose,—fitter to be made the sabbath, to commemorate his birth-day from the dead, and his entrance into his kingdom; than the last day of the week, the old sabbath, on which day he lay in the grave, and under death? Kings and potentates use to celebrate their birth-day, and the day of entrance into their kingdom: and this King of kings,—was it not fit, that such a memorial should be of his birth-day, and entrance into his dominion?

And compare the creation and Christ's resurrection,—whether of them was the greater matter? whether of them the greater work? Was not the resurrection? Not, indeed, in regard of the power, that effected both, but in regard of the effect or concernment of man.

1. By his resurrection he had destroyed him, and that



that had destroyed the creation,—viz. sin and Satan: and did set up a better world, a world of grace and eternal life.

2. Had it not been better, that man, as he now was, sinful, had never been created, than Christ not to have risen again to save and give him life? As it was said of Judas, “It were better, if he had never been born;” so, it were better for sinful men, if they had never been born, than that Christ should not have been born from the dead, to restore and revive them.—Observe, that the resurrection of the heathen from their dead condition, took its rise and beginning from the resurrection of Christ; as Christ himself closely compares it from the example of Jonah’s rising out of the whale’s belly, and converting Nineveh. To that purpose is that prophecy, Isa. xxvi. 19; “Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise; awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust.” The dead heathen, that had lain so long in the grave of sin and ignorance,—when Christ’s body rose, had life put into them from that time, and they rose to the life of grace: for, by his resurrection, he had conquered him, that had kept them so long under death and bondage.

Now, was it not most proper for the church of the called heathen, to have a sabbath, that should commemorate the cause, time, and original, of this great benefit accruing to them?—



# A SERMON<sup>a</sup>,

PREACHED UPON

EXODUS, XX. 12.

*Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long  
in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

**T**HIS is the first commandment of the second table, and it is the “first with promise,” Eph. vi. 2. Why it is the first of the second table, the reason is easy: because, when the second table teaches our duty towards our neighbour, it is proper to begin with the neighbour nearest to us,—such are our father and mother;—and with the neighbour to whom we owe most peculiar duty, as we do to those that are comprehended under this title of ‘father and mother.’ But why this is called the “first commandment with promise,” is not so easy to resolve. The difficulties are in these two things:—

I. Because that seems to be a promise in the second commandment, “showing mercy unto thousands,” &c.

II. And if it be to be understood, the first of the second table, that hath a promise annexed unto it,—that is harsh, also, because there is no other promise in the second table: and the first commandment with promise, argues some other commandments with promise, to follow after. Now, to these difficulties I answer,

First, That, in the second commandment, is rather a description of God, than a direct promise; “A jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, &c, and showing mercy unto thousands of them, that love me.” As much gall is mingled there as honey; as dreadful threatenings as comfort; and, therefore, not to be looked on as a clear promise, but as an argument and motive to obedience, taken from both mercy and judgment.

Secondly, It is true, there is never a promise more in the second table, that comes after this; but there are abundance of promises after, in the rest of the law. And so may this be understood: it is the “first commandment with promise”

<sup>a</sup> English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1331.



in the whole law, from the law given at Sînai, to all the law that Moses gave them afterward.

And the first promise in the law, given to Israel, is the promise of long life; “That thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” So that here, especially, are four things to be spoken to:—

I. The nature of the promise: that it is a temporal promise concerning this life.

II. The matter of the promise: ‘length of life in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.’

III. The suitableness of the promise to the command: ‘Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long,’ &c.

IV. The extent of the promise: to *all* that keep the commandment.—Which four heads will lead us to the consideration of several questions.

I. The first leads us to this observation,—That the promises given to Israel, in the law, are, most generally, and most apparently, promises temporal, or of things concerning this life.

First, look upon this promise, which is first in the law; and whereas it may be construed two ways,—yet, both ways, it speaks, at first voice or appearance, an earthly promise. There may be an emphasis put either upon, ‘thy days shall be *long*,’ or upon ‘thy days long *in the land*.’—“Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long;” that thou mayest have *long life*.—Or, “Honour thy father and thy mother,” &c; that thou mayest have *long possession* of the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee; and mayest not be cast out of it, as the Canaanites were before thee.—Now, take it either way, what speaks it else, but a temporal promise,—and that that refers to this life, and to our subsistence in this world?

And so look upon those promises, that are in Lev. xxvi, and Deut. xxviii: and you find them all referring to temporal and bodily things.

And, hereupon, it may be observed, that you hardly find mention of any spiritual promises, especially not of eternal, in all Moses’s law. No mention of eternal life, joys of heaven, salvation, or everlasting glory: none but of things of this life. Hence it was, that the Sadducees denied the resurrection and the world to come, because they only owned



the five books of Moses; and, in all his books, they found not mention of any such thing.

And, therefore, when our Saviour is to answer a cavil of theirs, against the resurrection, Mark xii. 18, &c, observe what he saith, ver. 26; "Have ye not read in the book of Moses," &c. For he must prove the thing out of Moses to them, or they would take it for no proof. And observe, also, how he proves it by an obscure collection or deduction,—viz. because God says, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob:"—therefore, they lived, though they were dead. Which he would never have done, had there been plain and evident proof of it: and which if there had been, they could never have denied it.

And that which we are speaking to, that the promises of the law are of temporal things, is also asserted by that, Heb. viii. 6; "He is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises." If the promises of the law had been heavenly promises, there could not have been 'better promises.' Had they been of grace and glory, there could not have been 'better promises:'—but those of the law, were of this world, and earthly things.

Now, what shall we say to this, that God should give no better promises to his people? How could an Israelite but look after earthly things, when he had no promise, but of earthly things? How could he look after heaven, when he had no promise of heaven? when much of his religion might very easily become a temptation? The enjoining them so much ceremonious worship might,—indeed, it did,—prove a temptation to them to turn all religion into ceremony. Their laws, that enjoined them to separate from the heathen, and to have no communion with them, might easily become a temptation to them,—and so it did,—of prizing themselves, and despising others. Their promises, which seemed only to relate to earthly things, might,—and indeed did,—become a temptation to them to mind earthly things: and either, not to be acquainted with, or to neglect, things spiritual and heavenly. What, then, shall we say to these things?

Truly, the first thing we may say to them, may be to say nothing, but to stand in silence and admiration; and beget such a meditation in us as he had, that stood weeping over a toad, to think how much nobler a creature than that, God had made him,—and yet he had not been thankful. The



apostle Paul tells us, Heb. xi. 40, "God had provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect." And the apostle Peter tells us, 2 Pet. i. 4, that there "are given unto us, exceeding great and precious promises, that, by these, we might be partakers of the divine nature." And now look upon their allowances and ours, their promises and ours : and meditate what God had done to us in comparison of them ; and what we have done towards God in reference to these things.

The promises that God made to them in the law,—of corn and cattle, of land and money, health and long life ; if you look upon them reflexively one way, comparing them with sinful men's deserts, and they are great promises in comparison of what any man can deserve : but look upon them reflexively another way, and compare them with what God hath promised in the gospel, and they are but small and little to them. They were as the lesser light, the moon, that ruled the night and darkness of that mysterious and dark economy of the law : but these, as the greater light, the sun, to rule in the bright and glorious light of the gospel.

Compare what is said here in the command and promise, and what is added, Deut. v. 16, "That thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee ;" with such passages as these ; Eph. i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."—*Heavenly places* ; the word is ambiguous (shall I say ?) or large, to signify either 'heavenly places,' or 'heavenly things,' as you may observe in the text and margin. Now, whereas the Jews' blessing was in an earthly place, the land which the Lord their God gave them, he hath blessed us in 'heavenly places.'—Whereas it should be well with them in all outward earthly things, he hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in 'heavenly things.' Their promises did capacitate them to be partakers of the creature, and of things below ; but, 2 Pet. i. 4, "There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, whereby we are capacitated to be partakers of the divine nature."

You see the difference : now, Christian, where hath been thy gratitude, thy improvement ? Thou art partaker of a better covenant, better promises, better things : where hath been thy better obedience ? See what improvement the apo-



stle, or God, by his mouth, requires of us upon this account, 2 Cor. vii. 1: "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." I leave every one to examine himself, what cleansing, what perfecting of holiness, they have made, because of the promises.

I come to consider, why God gave Israel such promises of earthly things as he did.

And, first, we are to consider, that God hath given the promise of spiritual and heavenly things to the church, long before these temporal promises were given to Israel. Christ, grace, eternal life, enjoyment of God, were promised from the first day of Adam: and so that promise went all along with the church before the law, and continued also under the law. As the apostle saith, Gal. iii. 17, "The law could not make that promise of no effect." Observe the apostle's manner of argumentation there:—"Ye that stand upon justification by works, ye plead that the law saith, 'He that doth these things, shall live.' Most true: but his life must not be by the works of the law, but by the grace of the promise, which was before the law; and the law, coming after, could not disannul it."

And how God made spiritual and heavenly promises before the law, these and other places do abundantly testify; Luke i. 70, 71, &c; "As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began," &c.—Tit. i. 2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."—And that one for all, John i. 4; "In Christ was life." In him came the promise of life and grace, even from the beginning: and that life was the light, that holy men looked and walked after: and that light shone in the darkness of the types of the law, and in the darkness of the obscurity of the prophecies: "and the darkness comprehended it not."

So that Israel, when these temporal promises were given them, had, also, before them, the promises of grace, promises of things spiritual and heavenly: and they were to look through these, that were temporal,—at those, that were spiritual and eternal. Here is given a promise of long life upon earth, in the land which the Lord their God gave them. But they had before them, even from of old, the promises of eternal life to those, that obeyed the commandments of God,



and they were to look at and after this, through the other. And so the holy men among them did. That in Lev. xviii. 5, "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them;" which is oft repeated elsewhere,—doth it mean only this life? the apostle often shows it aimeth higher; viz. at spiritual and eternal life. And so the Jews themselves did generally understand it, though they failed in seeking that life, that it aimed at. As it is, Rom. x. 3; "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And when that man inquired, Matt. xix. 16, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life,"—and Christ bade him "keep the commandments;" he showed what was meant by that, Lev. xviii. 5; viz. That, by keeping the commandments, not only life here, but eternal life hereafter, is obtained. And so it is farther cleared by his words in Luke x. 28; "This do, and thou shalt live."

So that this, here, was not barely a temporal promise, but had, wrapped up in it, a farther promise of life eternal. And so had the other temporal promises, that were given them. And so some of the Jews interpret that, Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; "And I will set my tabernacle amongst you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people:" not only of God, being among his people here, but of his being in the midst of them, and they about him in heaven. And so you find the word 'heaven' in Scripture, sometimes to signify the 'church' here, as well as it signifies the 'state and place of glory hereafter.'

Now, you may ask, Why God, since he meant spiritual things and eternal under these temporal promises, did not speak out; but used such promises as might prove occasions of missing of those promises through misimprovement? And so we find, that this very thing proved the ruin of the Jewish nation; they being moved hereby to look at temporal things, and to neglect eternal. They looked, and still look, for a temporal kingdom of Christ, pompous and resplendent with worldly lustre. And this stands, as it were, a wood, or a fog, betwixt them, and the discerning of his spiritual kingdom, that they cannot, will not, see it. This makes them look for their Canaan again, and to be planted and



settled there anew. With which opinion too many Christians do concur, and look for some such glorious thing among the Jews, even this year, 'sixty-six.' Why, I say, did not God speak out spiritual and eternal things, but only obscurely hinted them in such temporal promises as these?

I answer, Because God would use the most feeling persuasions to them. Men are not so sensible of things spiritual, as they be of bodily; have not the feeling of things, that concern life eternal, as they have of this life. To have said, "Honour thy father and mother, that thou mayest inherit eternal life," had been a fair argument; but it is not so feeling to flesh and blood. No man, but is very desirous of long life here; and it is but one of a city, and two of a tribe, that more desires life eternal. The Gadarenes are more sensible of their swine, than Christ; and not one in many, but a promise of earthly prosperity, or bodily welfare, comes nearer his heart, than a promise of everlasting and heavenly glory,—health of body, than of soul,—showers of rain, than of grace,—bags of money, than all the treasures of Christ. Therefore, God gave such promises, as might be most feeling and persuasive, those that were most like to take. As the apostle, "I, being crafty, caught you with guile," as the Jews describe it. As one that gives his child nuts and plumbs, to bring him on to learn; so God gave to them those things, that, he was sure, would most please them.

The church of the Jews was a child under age, Gal. iv. 1—3: and God deals with them as with children, giving ordinances and promises according to its childhood; feeds them "with milk, and not with strong meat," because they were not so able to bear it. It is commonly said, they were not able to bear spiritual dispensations in their abstract simplicity; and, therefore, God gave them such carnal ordinances, according as they were able to bear them. It is true, they were carnal enough about the worship of God: but was it not, because they had such carnal ordinances from the first? The use of these, made them dote on them. Are there not thousands among Christians as carnal about God's service as they? that dote as much upon ceremony and outward formality in God's worship, as ever they did? And that because they have been brought up in such ceremonious way, or cannot come up to worship in spirit. And



might not the Jews have been as capable of the same spiritual manner of religion, as the Gentiles were, if God had set it up among them, when he first took them for the church?

Wherein, then, did the childhood of the church consist?

First, That it was yet but small of stature, in comparison of that full body and growth the church of God was to come to. See that, Eph. iv. 12, 13: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." What is the 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?' It is the mystical body of Christ in its full proportion,—viz. Jew and Gentile joined together. How small a babe was the church of the Jews, in comparison with what the church was, when the Gentiles of all nations were become the 'church?'

Secondly, That church was a child in knowledge, in comparison of the church under the gospel. Hence that promise, Isa. lxxv. 20: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days." The gospel should bring-in such light and means of knowledge, that none should be a child or infant in knowledge, if they had a mind to learn. It is true, they were so childish, because God afforded no clearer means of knowledge. And it is as true, that in some sort it was needful, the means of knowledge should be but as it was,—viz. that God, by those means, might make way to the knowledge and embracing of spiritual things under the gospel, when it came. Consider their carnal ordinances and temporal promises: God, in the gospel, was to bring-in a spiritual worship and religion. A better way, to make way for the embracing of that, could not be used, than by showing before the unprofitableness, the ineffectualness, of their carnal worship. This the apostle speaks to at large, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 9: "That gifts and offerings could not make him, that did the service, perfect; that sprinkling the blood of goats and bulls could not purge the conscience." The experience of this was the way to make men hearken after the sacrifice of Christ, that would do the work; that blood of Christ, that could purge to the utmost.

And the like might be instanced in other parts of that carnal service. So God gave them especially promises of



temporal things,—that he might teach them, that they should not be losers by his service. Their service was chargeable in gifts and offerings, and in going-up to Jerusalem, &c. Therefore, it was needful, that God should ply them with promises of temporal good, that they should lose nothing by his service, if they were faithful to it. Observe that, *Exod. xxxiv. 23*: “Thrice, in the year, shall all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.” What objections might be made against that ordinance! as that, while they were absent from home, their lands might be invaded by their enemies, &c. But he answers all in the next verse: “For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year.” And so might they except at the costliness of the sacrifices; but his promise satisfied all:—“Thou shalt be blessed in the fruit of thy body and land, in the herds of thy cattle, and flocks of thy sheep.”

And so had God laid-in stock in these promises for the gospel-church, when it should come in: which required so much ‘self-denial,’ and ‘forsaking house and lands;’ and which foretold of persecution. God had satisfied his people before, that he would take care for their support,—that none, for obedience to his commandments, should be a loser.

And thus much of the first thing propounded,—viz. the nature of the promise, that it is temporal.

II. We come now, in the second place, to consider the suitableness of the promise to the command. And what affinity, then, and agreement, hath this promise with the duty enjoined in the command? One would think it were more suitable to have said, “Honour thy father and mother, that thou mayest be honoured of thy children:”—“Honour thy magistrate, and thy superiors, that thou mayest also come to the like honour.” And such an agreement hath that saying of God, *1 Sam. ii. 30*: “Them that honour me, I will honour.” And why, therefore, is it said, “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land?”

I answer, first, There is this harmonious reason: thy father and thy mother, under God, gave thee being; and if thou honour them, thy being and well-being shall be prolonged. If thou desire long life, honour them, that, under God, gave thee life. I remember here, the gloss of some



Jewish expositors upon these words of Eve, Gen. iv. 1: when Cain was born, she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." The Hebrew word, that is rendered *from*, in greatest propriety, when it signifies any thing (as sometimes it does not), is *with*: and so they render it, "I have gotten a man *with* the Lord." Which they construe to this sense, "In the production of Adam, God only had an agency, and Adam none: but in the production of this my Son, I have been an agent with God; and I have gotten a Son with the Lord." But be it the one way or other (though I should construe it a third way,—viz. "I have gotten a man, even the Lord:" or, "I have obtained the Lord to become man:" as looking to the promise that Christ should be her seed), it is very well known, how much parents contribute to the production and life of their children: and, therefore, it is but a just claim, and a claim very suitable to that matter; "Honour thy father and thy mother," that gave thee life, that the life, they gave thee, may be prolonged. But,

Secondly, This promise is affixed to very many commandments in the law. As,

1. In general, Deut. v. 33: "Ye shall walk in the ways, which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and it may be well with you; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which ye shall possess."—And so, Deut. vi. 2: "That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and commandments, which I command thee, thou and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life: and that thy days may be prolonged."—And so, chap. xi. 8, 9, &c. And,

2. As thus, in general, it is promised to the obedience of all the commandments, so it is affixed to some special commandments, Deut. xxii. 6, 7, about the dam and her young. If a bird's-nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or in the ground, &c, thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days."—Deut. xxv. 15; "Thou shalt have a perfect and just weight; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have, that thy days may be prolonged in the land," &c.

Now, the reason of this affixing is, because life is so desirable by all men: and God useth arguments to persuade, which are most feeling, and come nearest and warmest to



the heart. And as that is a melting persuasive, Rom. xii. 1, "I beseech you by the mercies of God,"—so this is as melting a one, in regard of men's tenderness to themselves,—"I beseech you by the mercy" to be showed to your own selves.

III. And thus we have brought ourselves down to the third particular to be discoursed; and that is, the matter of the promise,—'length of life.'

But is long life such a blessing? is it so desirable? What say we to that passage, Job xiv. 1? "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble." If 'of few days,' where is the long life, that is here promised? If 'full of trouble,' where is that desirableness of long life, so as to account it such a blessing? If we well consider, what the Scripture speaks of the shortness and misery of human life, it may seem to set us at a stand, to think that God should so often promise 'long life,' when there is no such thing; but, as Psal. xxxix. 5, "Behold, thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth:"—and that he should promise it as a blessing, when, as Psal. xc. 10, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow." If we live to the utmost nature can hold out, it is but 'labour and sorrow.'

To speak to these scruples, and to reconcile the shortness of man's life, and the miseries of the longest life, to the promise in the text,—we are to consider life, not comparatively, but simply.

For, 1. The longest life, compared with the eternity of God, is nothing. So David compares it, Psal. xxxix. 5: "Mine age before thee is nothing:" that is, 'compared to thine everlastingness and eternity, is a thing of nothing at all; though of the longest date that ever life was, yet to thy years, that fail not, it is less than nothing.'—So, when the prophet saith, Isa. xl. 15, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance,"—this is not to be understood simply; for all nations are a vast bulk and mass in themselves: but, compared with God, they are but as a 'drop,' but as a smallest grain of 'dust.' And so the Psalmist, comparing the lasting of heaven and earth, with the everlastingness of God, makes them as of no lastingness at all, Psal. cii. 26, 27: "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment:



as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

2. The longest life, compared with the saints in glory, is as nothing,—2 Cor. v. 1, this 'tabernacle' always 'dissolving,' what is it to an 'eternal building in the heavens?'—"Here we have none abiding city," saith the apostle; but he saith again, 1 Thess. iv. 17, that "we shall be ever with the Lord."—Here "our life is but a vapour;" James iv:—"As a sleep;" Psal. xc; as nothing: but there we shall live as long, as the Lord himself shall live.

3. The longest life, compared with the long lives, that some have lived, to wit, the patriarchs before the flood,—is but of very few days: and but as an inch to an ell. And so Jacob compares his life, Gen. xlvii. 9: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been:" that is, 'few, and full of misery, have they been.' Jacob was of a very fair age, a hundred and thirty years old; and so old a man as, it is likely, Pharaoh had never seen so aged and venerable a head; and, therefore, you find him asking him but that one question, 'How old art thou?' And yet, in Jacob's computation, his age was but short in comparison of his fathers', that had gone before him: his hundred and thirty compared with Adam's nine hundred and thirty, or Methuselah's nine hundred and sixty-nine.

So that we are not to judge of long life so comparatively, but simply; and to measure it by the common stint of nature, that God hath set. Which Moses holds out to us, Psal. xc. 10: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they be fourscore years," &c. And so length of life is to be understood; that that reacheth up to that stint and limit of nature. So that though seventy or eighty years be but a short time in comparison of the eternity of God, and of heaven, and in comparison of the ages heretofore;—yet it is a long life, because it reacheth up to the utmost on nature's allowance.

And it is a long time, if we consider human frailty; that a poor piece of clay, a man as brittle as glass, as unstable as water, as fading and fleeting as a blast, or shadow,—a poor thing that carries death in its principle, and walks in danger of death every moment, should come up to seventy or eighty years, and the pitcher and glass not broken. It is a long



time for that, which is frailty itself, to hold so from breaking. So that though, comparatively, to come up to the full stint of nature, be but a short life; yet, simply considered, it is a long time for so brittle a thing to hold out. A long time for an ungodly man to be provoking of God all along; and a long time for a godly man to be from home in this sinful world, and not got to heaven.

But, if long life be so frequent in the mouth of God, as a promise of a blessing,—how was it, that God shortened men's lives, when they were at a fair length?

I have formerly observed to you, that lives were shortened at the flood, and brought from a thousand years almost to about five hundred, or not so much:—shortened again at the building of Babel, and cut, from about five hundred, to two hundred, or little more. And when God gives the ten commandments at Sinai, and this promise in this commandment, he was to shorten lives again: which he did within a year and a half, or thereabout, after he had given this promise at Sinai. Now, if long life were such a promise, such a blessing, why did he not suffer lives to stand at their first stint, or at that length, that those lived before the flood?

Let us a little consider the length of those first lives, and then the shortening of them.

Some ascribe the length of them to natural causes: as that then their bodies were more big, strong, and vigorous, than men are now; and that the elements were then more pure and uncorrupted than they became after; and that their diet was more moderate, wholesome, and nourishing. Which if it were so, though some question may be made of it; yet, certainly, there was something more concurrent to the prolongation of their lives to that long extent, than merely natural causes. Their diet, indeed, was changed after the flood, from eating herbs and fruits of the ground, to a liberty to eat flesh; and to that refer the words of Lamech upon the naming of his son 'Noah,' Gen. v. 29: "And he called his name *Noah*, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground, which the Lord hath cursed:" that is, 'he shall be a comfort to the world in that liberty to eat flesh, that shall be granted to him:' which will be a great ease from the toil and tugging used before, to get all the provision they used, by toiling in the ground.



But were the elements changed after the flood, as well as their diet was changed?

First, We might ascribe the length of their lives something to the promise of life through Christ, that was given to Adam. And the nearer they were to the giving of the promise,—the more, might we conceive, they received bodily vigour from the promise, for temporal life, as well as spiritual life and vigour of soul to life eternal. What was that that made Israel to multiply, and to be so fruitful in Egypt, even when they were over-toiled, and worn out with labour? St. Stephen tells you, Acts vii. 17, that it was the strength of the promise: “When the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.” This it was, and not the strength of nature, that made the men, though over-spent with hard toil and labour, yet to be vigorous for generation. And this was it, that made the Hebrew women so lively and quick, in time of travail and delivery, incomparably beyond the women of Egypt: as the midwives do relate of them to Pharaoh, Exod. i. 19. For that was not a lie of the midwives, as divers expositors will tell you, it was; but it was a true relation of them, observing the wonderful hand of God, in such a strange matter. But,

Secondly, We are to consider, that, in that minority of the world, God spared men to very long lives for propagation’s sake, and the peopling of the world. And this, methinks, is hinted in that constant expression, Gen. v. 10, “and begat sons and daughters.”

It might be some question, whether the holy and profane, before the flood and after, had their lives lengthened alike. Seth, the son of Adam, a holy man, lived ‘nine hundred and twelve’ years. Do we think Cain the son of Adam, that wicked wretch, had such a long life?—Enos, the son of Seth, the grandchild of Adam in that holy line, lived ‘nine hundred and five’ years. Think we Enoch, the son of Cain, and grandchild of Adam in that wicked line, lived so long?—So, after the flood, Heber lived ‘four hundred and sixty-four years.’ Do we think, that Canaan, or Cush, or Mizraim, or any of that cursed line, lived half so long a life?

There is some reason of this question, because we see, in other examples, that vigour and strength of nature in some of the holy line, because of the virtue of the pro-



mise: which you cannot conceive to have been in any heathen.

However, if those in the wicked line, before the flood and after, did not live to that age, that those in the holy line did,—yet it is doubtless they lived far beyond the age of men afterward, for the propagating and peopling of the world. Ishmael, if he were one profane, as he is commonly reputed to be, yet he lived a ‘hundred and thirty-seven’ years; Gen. xxv. 17. But,

Thirdly, A chief reason of the long life of the holy patriarchs that may be given, is this, That they might propagate religion in their generations. God gives testimony of Abraham, that he did so, Gen. xviii. 19: and it was the care and work of the other holy ones to do the like. Noah is said to be a ‘preacher of righteousness;’ and Enoch a ‘prophet.’ And they and the rest were as a living Bible to instruct their children and posterity, in the knowledge, fear, and service, of God. There was then no Scripture written; but the knowledge of God, and of the ways of God, was conveyed from generation to generation, by word of mouth of those holy men. And, therefore, God carried them on to so very great an age, that they might be props and pillars of religion in their families, to the sound and sure establishment of it.

Now, it pleased God, by degrees, to cut short the length of such lives, but it was still in displeasure. He shortened man’s life after the flood, because of the sinfulness of men in their long lives before the flood. He shortened them again at the building of Babel, for the sins of those wicked men, that went about to build it. And again in the wilderness; where he brought-in the stint of seventy or eighty years, because of the people’s murmuring, and despising the pleasant land. Upon which Moses, then present, makes the ninetieth Psalm: see ver. 7—9: “We are consumed in thine anger,” &c: and “all our days pass away in thy wrath. We spend our years as a tale.” And why? “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.”

So that, by shortening lives in judgment, or in way of judgment, he showed that that we are upon, that prolonging of life is a mercy or blessing. But this with including the proper end of this promise, and of God’s prolonging life,—that man may more serve and glorify God in his generation,



and do more good to his generation, and lay up the more stock for eternal life for himself.

‘Long life,’ to many a one, proves a curse; and it would have been better, they had never lived, never been born. Cain’s life and preservation, granted him by God, proved but a sad curse to him: and that indeed, not so much upon the account, that God prolongs his life, as upon the account of his own abuse of God’s prolongation. Observe that, Gen. iv. 15: “And the Lord said unto Cain, Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any, finding him, should kill him.” Cain, in ver. 14, reads in his own conscience the law of justice, which afterward was given by the mouth of God, Gen. ix. 6: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” That made him say, “Any one that meets me, will kill me.” God secures him against this, and gives him a ‘token,’ that none should kill him. Some think he set some ‘visible mark’ or brand upon him, to signify to all that he was Cain: but if God did not tell every man in the world, that he should not kill Cain, as well as he told Cain, that he should not be killed,—this was the likeliest way to have him murdered, when all that met him, knew that he was the murderer.—Therefore, I should rather render it, and so the original doth very properly, if not most properly, bear it, “He sets,” or “gave him a sign, that any, finding him, should *not* slay him:”—‘Cain, take this for a sign, that none shall kill thee,—that I denounce sevenfold vengeance to him that doth it.’ Now, this securing him against being killed, and God’s prolonging and preserving his life,—was it in favour or punishment? Compare the rest of the dealing and words of God to him; and it will seem and appear the latter,—viz. that God kept him alive to anguish of conscience, and the longer misery here.

But how does Cain use this his prolonged time? As much as he can, to delude the intent of God: he marries, builds cities, sets himself to have and reap content in this world, and his portion here. And this is “the way of Cain,” Jude, ver. 11. Had it not been better for him, when all was done, that he had never lived so long, never been born? So is it with the wicked of a hundred years old, Isa. lxxv. 20; “The sinner of a hundred years old is cursed.” And so it



is with thousands, that, spending their time in vanity and folly, their life and age be it never so long, proves but a sad curse to them, and hath but heaped the more guilt upon them.

But where is the fault? Not but that long life, in itself, is a blessing: but that man, by abusing it, hath turned it to a curse. There is no earthly blessing, but, by man's abuse, may become a curse. That is terrible in Mal. ii. 2: "I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings." But that is, because men make such things a curse to themselves. Haman's honour, an earthly blessing in itself, became a curse to him; but it was through his own fault. Jeroboam's promotion, an earthly blessing, became a curse to him, and his whole family; but it was through his own abuse of it. And so may I say of any earthly comfort. And so is long life to many, through their mispending and abusing it.

This I have spoken, to take off an objection against long life's being a blessing. There is undoubtedly a blessing in long life; otherwise, God would never have so frequently, as he doth, held it out as a promise. And that we may view the blessing the better, we first consider upon those things, that may be said against it; that afterward, we may the better view the blessing itself.

One objection then is, That long life to many proves, in the end, to be but a curse,—as I have showed before: and they have the longer score to answer for; the greater heaps of sin to be arraigned upon; the sadder account of so much time mispent.

But for answer to this, as I said before, there is no temporal thing, which, in itself, is a blessing, but wicked men, by abuse of it, make it a curse. They make their table a snare,—their wealth, a trap,—their long life, a curse.—And it is no wonder, if they do so by these things: for they make divine ordinances, which, in themselves, are a 'savour of life,' to become to them the 'savour of death;' nay, Christ himself to become a 'stumbling-block,' and their ruin. Now, the goodness or blessing in things, is not to be judged of by such men's using,—but by what they are, in their own nature: as thousands in hell curse the time, that ever they lived; so thousands in heaven bless God for ever, that ever they lived here so long. Long life to the one party was balm; the other, made it poison.



There is another objection, That long life to many proves but long misery; therefore, is not such a promise and blessing. Such are the miseries of this life, even to them that spend their time the best, that Solomon tells us, Eccles. vii. 1, "That the day of death, is better than the day of birth:" and, chap. iv. 2, 3, "I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive. Yea, better is he than both, that hath not yet been, which hath not seen the evil, which is done under the sun." And how many of the saints of God, that have spent their lives as well as ever men did, as ever men could, spend their lives; yet, because of the miseries of life, have desired that their lives might be cut off, and that they might live no longer! How oft is this Job's mournful tune over and over! chap. vi. 8, 9: "O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing I long for; even that it would please God to destroy me, and that he would loose his hand and cut me off." And, chap. vii. 15, 16; "My soul chooseth strangling and death, rather than my life: I loathe it; I would not live always:"—and so almost in every one of his speeches. And the same tune is Elias at, 1 Kings xix. 4; "It is enough now, O Lord; take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." And Jeremiah sings the same doleful ditty, when he curseth the day of his birth, chap. xx. 14. How is long life, then, a blessing, when the sorrows of it make men so weary of it?

I answer, This were true, indeed, if the blessing of long life consisted only in enjoying earthly prosperity: and then the children of God were, of all men, most miserable; for they have the least earthly prosperity. But the blessing of long life consists in things of another nature. For those holy men's desiring, because of their afflictions here, to have their lives cut off,

1. We neither wronged them nor religion, should we say, it was a human frailty and failing in them. But,

2. It was not so much for that they undervalued the prolonging of their lives, and the blessing in having life prolonged,—as that they placed not their blessedness in living here; but were assured and longed after a better life. Not one of them was unwilling to live; but because he was very well prepared to die, therefore he wished for death rather.

And now that we may come to consider, wherein the



blessing of long life consisteth, let us a little take up some places and passages of Scripture,—and some arguments in reason, that declare and proclaim it, as, of itself, to be a blessing.

I. Prov. iii. 16: Solomon, urging men to espouse and marry wisdom, tells what portion and dower they shall have that get her: “Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left, riches and honour.” Observe, that he accounts ‘length of days’ a ‘*right-hand* dower,’ and ‘riches and honour’ but ‘a *left-hand* one.’ And, indeed, what are riches and honour, if a man have not length of days to enjoy? And the same Solomon, commending old age, saith, Prov. xvi. 31, “It is a crown of glory,” or, a glorious crown, if the long life that brought it up thither, have been spent as it should. I might heap up many such passages, but these suffice.

II. Consider that it is threatened, for a curse and punishment, that the “bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days,” Psal. lv. 23: that the men of Eli’s house should die in their prime, 1 Sam. ii. 31. But I will name but one for all; how oft threatened, such and such shall be “cut off.” I need not to cite places; the books of the law are full of such expressions,—“shall be cut off from his people; from the congregation,” &c;—which some understand of ‘excommunication,’ but it means ‘cutting-off by the hand of God,’ by some untimely or fatal death, or shortening of life. It is threatened as a curse, that his days shall not be prolonged, but cut off.

III. Ye have holy men in Scripture, praying for prolonging of their lives, and that upon this warrant, that God promised long life as a blessing, Psal. xxi. 4: “He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.”—And Psal. xxxix. 13; “O spare me, that I may recover strength.”—And Psal. cii. 24; “I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days.” And so in the case of Hezekiah: how bitterly did he take the tidings of the ‘cutting-off of his days?’ Whether it were, that it went sadly with him to die of the plague; or, that he saw not Jerusalem delivered from Sennacherib; yet, certainly, it cost some tears to think he was to be taken away, even in his prime, and his life prolonged no farther.

IV. To this may be added, that God promised it for a peculiar blessing, “Thou shalt come to thy grave in a good



old age," Job v. 26. And how feeling a promise is that, Zech. viii. 4: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age!" Methinks I see the streets full of such venerable heads and gravity, every one crowned with gray hairs and old age, a crown of blessing.

But what need I arguments to prove this? What one thing is there in the world, that hath more votes and voices than this? For who is there, that desires not to "live long, and see many days?"—And "skin for skin, and all that he hath, will he give for his life," that it may be prolonged. And who but will be contented to part with any earthly blessing, so his life may be preserved?

Now, wherein it is, that long life is a blessing, is best observed by considering what is the proper end and aim of men's living. "Friend, wherefore camest thou hither?"—Why did God bring thee into the world, and why dost thou live?—A question very pertinent, and very considerable. For the greatest number of men and women in the world go out of the world, before they know or consider why they came in. Much like Ahimaaz, 2 Sam. xviii. 29, that entreats Joab to let him run to David, and runs hard; and when he comes to David, to his journey's end, all that he can relate is, "When Joab sent thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I cannot tell what it was." God brings men into the world to run their race; they see a great bustle in the world, and they keep a great stir themselves; and when they come to their journey's end, they cannot give account what the business was, for which they came into the world. What do you think, he thought he came into the world for, that, when he died, commanded this to be written on his tombstone,—Πολλὰ φάγων, &c. "I have eaten much, and drunken much, and done much mischief, in my time; and now, here I lie!" Who among thousands, in his life, or indeed in his thoughts, owns the proper end of living?

The apostle tells us what it is, Acts xvii. 26, 27: "God hath made all nations of men, &c, that they should seek the Lord; if, haply, they might feel after him," &c. And the same apostle, 2 Cor. v. 15, "They which live, should not live to themselves," but to him by whom they live.—The schools do very truly tell us, that "God created reasonable crea-



tures, men and angels, that they might serve God, and partake of God; which unreasonable creatures cannot do." So that here is the proper answer to the question, Why do we live? and the proper end of our living,—to serve God by whom we live, and to get interest in him, and participation of him; to live to God here, that we may live with him and enjoy him hereafter.

And by this are we to judge of the blessing of a long life, and not by any earthly thing, or occurrence in our lives. Long life is not, therefore, a blessing to any, because he lives long in peace and prosperity,—because he gets much wealth, much credit, experience, wisdom, in so long a time: but, because he hath got much interest in God, and done much service to God. That of Solomon must be understood prudently, and we must be sure to take his right meaning in it, Eccles. iv. 3: "Better than either living or dead is he, that hath not yet been." Is this absolutely true? No, but only relatively; viz. relating to earthly miseries. For the missing of these he escapes best, that never was, and never saw the evil done under the sun.

But as to the thing itself, absolutely considered, that paradox, that is sometimes maintained in dispute in the schools, is true in some kind and degree; "*Præstat esse miserum, quam non esse*;" "It is better to be miserable, than not to be at all:" he that never was, nor never shall be, he that never lived, nor never shall live,—shall never praise God, never see the works of God, never enjoy God; and that is worse than enduring the miseries, that men meet withal upon earth.

This is the proper end of life, and the blessing of life,—viz. to praise, serve, enjoy, God. And by this we must state the blessing of a long life,—viz. as allowing more time and space to accomplish and perfect those ends. And upon the aim at these ends it is, that the saints of God have begged of God for long life; Psal. xxxix. 13; "That I may recover strength," and be fitter for my duty, and thy work,—and fitter for thee, when thou callest. Psal. lxxi. 18: "Now, also, when I am old, forsake me not: until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one, that is to come."—Isa. xxxviii. 19: "The living, he shall praise thee; as I do this day." This was the end and blessing of prolonging Hezekiah's life, that he was still alive



to praise God. And this is the work of those, whose lives are preserved and prolonged.

To prove the blessing of prolonging life, let me first appeal to any here. Man, or woman, art thou prepared to die, if God should call at this very instant? If God send a messenger to bid thee "set thy house in order, for thou shalt die,"—couldst thou take it better than Hezekiah did? Dost thou not desire, that God would spare, and yet give some more respite, some longer time, some more space added to thy life? And why? Thou darest not say, That I may enjoy the world, take my pleasure, gather wealth, live in earthly delights, yet longer. Why then?—O! that I may be better fitted for heaven; that I may have more repentance, a better composure of heart, a better stock of good words, and provision for eternity.—This, by thy confession, is the blessing, and a choice blessing, of a long life; that a man may do God the more service, serve his generation the more, stock himself the more fully with grace for glory.

Herein, then, properly, is the blessing of prolonged life, that men have time to do for God and their souls, to lay up good store for heaven and eternity, to stock up the comforts of a good conscience, and store of grace, which, in old age, makes them fresh and flourishing,—and does, as it were, revive them, and make them young again.

And now, brethren, let my exhortation be to you that are aged, and gone far in years,—to consider seriously with yourselves, whether your prolonged time hath been made a blessing to you, by your improvement, or not. Let me be a monitor, this day, to all gray heads here, to remember their age. God hath prolonged your time, some to fifty, sixty, seventy, years,—some to more: what blessing hath this prolonging been to you?

And to youth, that desire long life, my exhortation to them is,—to set in a good course betime, that God may delight to prolong their life: and that the lengthening of their life may be a blessing.



## SERMON-NOTES.

The five following pages are now printed, *for the first time*, from a MS. in the British Museum.—See the Lansdown MSS., No. 377. 18., at page 62, “Collections out of Dr. Lightfoot’s Sermon-Notes.”—ED.

### JOHN, XIV. 30.

*The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

WHAT he means by ‘the prince of this world,’ may easily be understood, by considering who it was, that came to sift Christ, and to try what was in him. Lay but another passage in the gospel to this, and it clears it,—viz. Luke iv. 13. “When the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.” He leaves him but ‘for a season;’ and now, at his passion, he attempts him again: now, the devil, the prince of this world, was coming to his second and great onset.

### MATT. XXIII. 9.

*Call no man father upon earth.*

Where by ‘father’ he means ‘master’ or ‘tutor.’ In reference to which word, ‘scholars’ are called ‘children.’

### REV. XX. 1—3.

*And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years: and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should not deceive the nations any more, &c.*

And yet, all these thousand years, he was at liberty as before. He encompassed the earth, and walked in it as aforetime; caused the ten bloody persecutions against the Christians; caused the Roman emperors and nation, to wal-



low in that bloodiness and filthiness, as they did : and yet, because he could not deceive the world with blindness and heathenism, as he had done,—but that the gospel was now come in, and undeceived men, and brought light and life among them,—he is said to be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up. It is as chains and imprisonment, and the bottomless pit and hell, to him, that he cannot do the mischief, and work the destruction, by the blindness of heathenism, that he had done before.

MATT. IX. 14. 16.

*Then came unto him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said, No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, &c.*

You must not patch Judaism and the gospel together, nor mingle your legal and Pharisaical fast and ceremonious devotion, with the pure spiritual tenor of the gospel ; but all things must be new. And patching up a little formality, a little outside-devotion, a little morality, is not that, that will do the work, while there is not ‘renewing :’ this is but to patch new cloth upon an old garment : but we must be transformed by renewing, as the apostle adviseth, Rom. xii. 2.

2 COR. V. 17.

*Therefore, whosoever is in Christ, is a new creature : old things are past away, all things become new.*

The apostle’s arguing is from Christ’s so disposing in matters of religion, to what is required of a Christian in matter of religiousness. Christ has made all things new in point of religion and economy ; therefore, he that is in Christ Jesus, must be new also.

1 SAM. X. 6. 9.

*The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy, and shalt be turned into another man. And it was so, when he turned his back to go from him, God gave him another heart.*

“He became another man : God gave him another heart :”—These speak high, as if he were now thoroughly trans-



formed by the renewing of his mind ; whereas, indeed, there was no such matter. Saul, that became the constant persecutor of David, and murderer of the priests of the Lord, above fourscore at one clap ; that went to inquire of a witch and a devil ; and one, that, in the end, became his own murderer ;—was this man ever so renewed in his mind, as to make him a holy, acceptable sacrifice to God ? No such thing. But that for which he is said to “ become another man, and that the Lord gave him another heart,” was, that some extraordinary actings of the Spirit of God came upon him,—insomuch, that he prophesied with the prophets ; and he was enlivened with some more mettle and magnanimity for his royal function, to which he was now called, than he had before, when he was a private person, and followed his father’s asses. So Balaam, a wretched villain, yet once had the spirit of prophecy : that spirit sometimes came upon him, and he had his raptures : it might truly be said of him, that now he was “ another man” than he was before, and had “ another heart” than he had before.

JOB, xxv. 4.

*How can man be justified before God, or how can he be clean, that is born of a woman ? Behold ! even to the moon, and it shineth not ; and the stars are not pure in his sight : how much less man, that is a worm,—and the son of man, that is a worm ?*

“ Man a worm.” Mortal man and woman, what is thy name, and what thy father’s name ?—I am a worm, and the son of a worm ; and that is the name of all my family. “ I said to corruption, ‘ Thou art my father ;’ and to the worm, ‘ Thou art my mother and my sister,’ ” Job xvii. 14. A poor, creeping, crawling thing now upon earth, as vile as can be, and of no worth ; as poor a creature as can creep, and of no strength. But that is not all ; when I speak of a worm, cry “ Unclean, unclean.” And the Jews will teach thee ; for they say, “ That if a man hold a worm in his hand, all the water in Jordan cannot wash him clean, while he holds her there. And you know, that, in the law, creeping things were an abomination ; they might not be eaten, nor their carcass touched, Lev. xi. Such an unclean, unclean thing is man in his natural state and principles,—“ altogether become filthy,” Psal. xiv. 3.



Now, look upon a worm crawling on earth, and look up to the moon and stars, and compare their beauties and complexions. You will say, "It must needs require a great change and transformation, that this poor thing should be as glorious, as resplendent, as those noble lights of heaven:" and yet, even those lights shine not to God, are not pure in the sight of God. Oh! what a vast change and transformation is required for a poor worm, man, that he may become a beauty more shining and pure, in the sight of God, than the moon and stars!

GEN. v. 3.

*Adam—begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.*

What is that? If a painter should come to draw Adam's picture then, in what shape must he represent him? I remember that emblem among other nations, that are constant to their fashions,—viz. an Englishman, naked, with a pair of shears in his hand, and a piece of cloth under his arm, ready to be cut out into any fashion. So, truly, must Adam be painted; first naked, disrobed of those glorious robes of "God's image," that he was arrayed withal in his creation. You have, in the Revelation, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet: a glorious glittering suit to be clothed with, the sun; and yet the sun, in all his glory, shines not so bright as the first clothing of Adam did,—I mean, the "image of the living God," wherewith he was arrayed. "God made man in his own image. Heaven and earth might stand amazed to see a man so infinitely richly clothed. But he fell among thieves; and they stripped him of his clothing, and turned him stark naked, that now he appears in 'his own image.' Such a spectacle now, as may fright you to look upon; black,—sinful,—mortal,—in God's displeasure,—and breaking out into all manner of scurfs, and leprosy of lusts and evil concupiscence. Now, doth it not, therefore, require a great and strange transforming, that the children of such an Adam should come to carry the image of God instead of the image of Adam? From mortal to be capable of immortality and glory? from being corrupt with deceitful lusts (Eph. iv. 24), to be created anew in righteousness and holiness?



1 COR. xv. 44. 46.

*There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. Howbeit that is not first, which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that, which is spiritual.*

He speaks of bodies, as they now are, and as they shall be after the resurrection. Now a saint of God carries about with him a natural body, clogged with flesh, loaden with weight and corruption: but after the resurrection, his body shall be changed and made spiritual without any such weight and burden, grossness or bulk. Our vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21.

ROM. vii. 14.

*We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, &c.*

“Law spiritual?” why? Because I am carnal, and because the law is given to work me to a spiritual frame, and to get me free from to sin.



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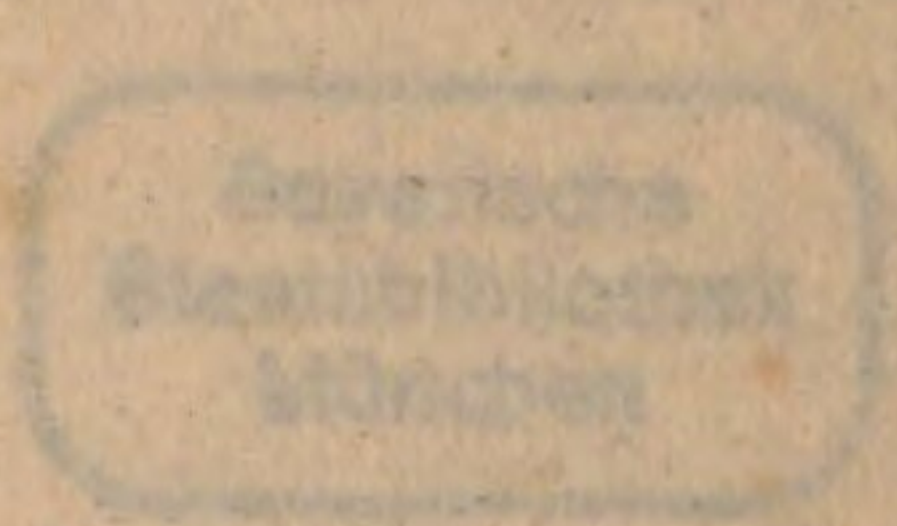
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